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THE MADNESS
THE EYE



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THE INDEPENDENT

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A nation descends into anarchy



A man lies before the riot police who shot him during rioting in Jakarta yesterday; top right, he is carried away from the scene. The condition of the victim was not known. Last night fires were still burning across the city centre Photographs: Achmad Ibrahim/AP



THE FUTURE of President Suharto of Indonesia was in grave doubt last night after mounting popular unrest erupted in riots which devastated large areas of Jakarta and left the capital in a state of near anarchy.

The President was due to fly into Jakarta this morning, after reports in Indonesian newspapers that he will step down if he no longer had the "trust" of his people.

"If I am no longer trusted I will become a sage, and endeavour to get close to God," he was quoted as saying during a state visit to Egypt which was cut short by the escalating disturbances. "I will spend my time guiding my children so they become good people, guide the community and give advice."

President Suharto has in the past made similar statements, and his remarks were downplayed by his foreign minister, Ali Alatas. But in the President's absence there appeared to be a vacuum of power in the world's fourth biggest nation, as mobs of looters sacked large areas of the city unchecked by police or army.

Tanks and armoured cars were seen driving through the centre of town last night, and the Jakarta military commander, Major General Syafie Syamsudin promised to "face rioters and looters firmly".

Potential successors to the President - including senior generals and opposition figures - made no public statements about the political situation and appeared to be biding their time. "The situation is going to improve," said General Wiranto, the chief of the armed forces. "Please believe in the military."

What began three days ago



Richard Lloyd Parry sees Jakarta
ravaged by street mobs as the people
of Indonesia turn against their dictator

as a peaceful student demonstration has transformed itself in the past 48 hours into something that defies easy categorisation - part political protest, part pillage and part ethnic pogrom. Jakarta has been tense since Tuesday night when six students were shot dead by police breaking up a demonstration at a private university. On Wednesday, mobs of ordinary Jakartans rampaged along two

headquarters of the social affairs ministry which is run by the president's daughter, Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana.

Shops and businesses closed down in most parts of central Jakarta. The toll road to the airport was closed, stranding many passengers in their hotels, and many outbound flights were filled up with retreating expatriates and ethnic Chinese Indonesians who are often scapegoated in times of unrest.

The Indonesian currency, the rupiah, whose collapse last summer set off economic turmoil throughout the country, fell steeply, further jeopardising the programme of economic reform and recovery agreed between the government and the International Monetary Fund.

By mid-morning yesterday, Gajah Mada Street, a main road linking central Jakarta with Chinatown and the docks to the north was empty of motorists as the looters set to work. Just before noon, a squadron of 30 helmeted troops on motorbikes roared out of the smoke towards the north.

Suddenly, the silhouettes of soldiers became visible firing into the air and taking level aim at people on the streets. Everyone ran for cover, the rounds fired were either blanks or the rubber coated bullets which have claimed several lives this week. But there were confirmed reports of only a handful of deaths

or injuries by the end of the day.

By the afternoon, there was hardly a pane of glass left unsmashed. Dozens of cars were burned out or burning. For miles there were no police or soldiers to be seen and in several parts of the city the red-beretted marines, traditionally the favourites of ordinary people, were seen joining hands with looters.

Individual motivation is difficult to fathom, but even the

most opportunistic of the rioters explain their actions in political terms. "It's revenge for what the military did to the students," said one man who identified himself as Danny. "Nepotism and corruption," shouted someone else. "The Chinese have debts, and we have to pay them," said another man.

A disproportionate number of the reported dead have been Chinese, and if racist sentiment catches hold among the Muslim majority then a truly dreadful situation looms. But the most vehement abuse was reserved for the President. An 18-year-old woman, Linda Putri, screwed up her face and spat out the words, "I hate Pak [Father] Harto."

Family nation, page 3

Inside

How Suharto
turned a country
into a family firm
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Leading article
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streets adjoining the campus. Yesterday, after a night in which at least 11 people were burned alive after mobs set their homes alight, the anarchy spread throughout the city.

For miles the streets of Jakarta look like the set of a disaster film. Hundreds of shops, houses, public buildings, police stations, hotels, shopping centres and markets were burned. Among them were a Heineken beer brewery, the home of Liem Sioe Liong, one of Indonesia's richest men and a close friend of President Suharto, and the

In brief

Lawrence plea

THE five suspects in the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence are to seek judicial review of a public inquiry's order that they attend the hearing and answer questions. Page 2

Microsoft talks

MICROSOFT was negotiating in Washington yesterday in a bid to fend off a potentially crippling action by the US government. Page 23



Blair takes tougher line in Ulster

By David McKitterick and Kim Sengupta

TONY BLAIR yesterday signalled a new and more exacting government line on testing the republican movement's commitment to purely democratic means of action in an attempt to boost Protestant support for the Good Friday agreement.

Visiting Belfast in an effort to persuade the large numbers of Unionists who are undecided on how to vote in next Friday's referendum, he promised legislation aimed at ensuring that the IRA's "so-called war is finished, done with, gone".

He listed a range of factors, including the dismantling of paramilitary structures and co-operation on arms decommissioning, which he said the Government would put into legislation. But in a meticulously worded speech he appeared to stop short of specifying what Unionist critics of the accord want - making IRA decommissioning a formal requirement before Sinn Fein can be admitted into a new administration.

In his speech he made only a glancing reference to the early release of prisoners, which has led to much Unionist criticism. This sentiment may be exacerbated by the release, on four-day home leave, of the notorious gunman Michael Stone.

Mr Blair said there had to be a clear commitment that violence was over for good, with an end to bombings, killings and beatings and an end to targeting and procurement of weapons.

But in a balancing section of his speech he added: "We are not setting new preconditions or barriers. On the contrary, we want as many people as possible to use the agreement as their bridge across to an exclusively peaceful path."

Mr Blair's increased pressure on republicans found an echo

in Dublin where the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, declared: "People are entitled to an absolute assurance that the conflict is over, that weapons will not be used again by either the parties owning them or allowed to fall into the wrong hands."

Mr Blair's walkabout and talk at the Belfast Balmoral Show was not quite the slick production one expects from new Labour. His speech was broadcast at strategic points outside. But much of it was indistinct and accompanied by neighing of horses and mooing of cattle.

Many of those present, however, waited in the belief that Mr

Blair would appear outside for a question-and-answer session. In the event, this was cancelled at the last moment, and the PM and his entourage made a quick exit from the back of the stands.

Robert Fraser, a Protestant farm manager, said he had wanted clarification about aspects of the speech. "Blair was going on about reviews on the rules of the settlement including decommissioning. Who is going to be doing that? ... I wanted him to stand here and answer these questions. It seems to me he is only ready for things his people are carefully setting up."

Loyalist released, page 2

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The Indonesian autocrat may be brought down by a force even the mightiest tyrant cannot control – the global economy.

The secretive ruler who turned his country into a family business

By Rupert Cornwell

THE BAPAK he used to be called by a grateful nation – the “father” of Indonesia. He is secretive and shy, almost mystical in his ways. His style is as modest as that of his predecessor, Sukarno, was flamboyant. If needs be, he can be ruthless. But his true mastery lies in playing one rival off against another, in turning silence and secrecy into tools of power. Thus, amid rumour and shadows, President Suharto has ruled the fourth most populous country in the world for a third of a century. But now the Bapak looks about to be brought down by something the mightiest autocrat cannot control: the global economy of the 20th century.

Suharto's Indonesia has been a mutant Asian tiger. Outwardly, it has obeyed the principles of the market, fostered by a group of California-trained technocrats called the “Berkeley Mafia”; but in truth suffused with economic nationalism, and perverted by cronyism and rank corruption. The beneficiaries include an inner circle of businessmen, prospering mightily from government contracts, and licences and protection, in return for financial support for the regime. The innermost circle of all, however, is the Suharto family.

Just how much the four of his six children – Tommy, Siti, Sigit, and Bambang (“Toshiba”), as

the mocking acronym has it) – have accumulated through their interests in telecommunications, hotels, cars and a host of other sectors may only be guessed. The estimates range from \$5bn to as much as \$30bn – an amount equal to a seventh of the entire economy as measured in those happier days of 1996, when a dollar fetched only 2,300 rupiah. Today with the exchange rate at 11,000 rupiah, and given the probability that the Suhartos have been

Ceausescu of Romania, executed in the coup of Christmas 1989. The closest parallel perhaps, geographically and politically, is President Marcos, who accumulated a vast personal fortune until being ousted in 1986 by a popular revolt in the Philippines, similar to the one in Indonesia today.

One thing though is certain. Whether this mechanism for perpetual family enrichment can continue, depends now on the military out of which Suharto

steadily through the ranks, to become commander of the strategic reserve in 1962. Three years later as President Sukarno sided with the Communists, came the celebrated but still not fully explained coup, whose failure would topple him. In 1967, Suharto became president, the only change of regime in the country's modern history.

In the decades that followed, an unspoken fear underpinned his rule: that without the guiding hand of the Bapak, all would revert to the shambles from which he rescued the country. The events of 1965, when the bodies of four generals were thrown down a well at Halim Air Force Base near Jakarta, and a vengeful army used the pretext to permit the slaughter of thousands of ethnic Chinese are etched in the collective folk memory.

No matter Suharto, as chief-of-staff, may have presided over the killing. He had restored order. It was his good fortune also that the first period of his rule coincided with the growth of Indonesia's oil industry. Thanks to the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) and political upheavals in the Middle East, oil prices in the 1970s tripled, and then tripled again. Pertamina, the state oil company became a power in the region – and a byword for corruption beyond.

But enough wealth and public investment was trickling

down to ordinary people to keep them content. By now the country was self-sufficient in rice. And when the oil boom burst in the mid-1980s, Suharto was astute enough to switch into textiles and the other manufacturing industries that were making the fortune of South Korea and the earlier Asian tigers. The rest was inevitable: a flood of foreign investment from a West rejoicing in his anti-Communism, giant projects, extravagant patronage and even more extravagant corruption. But last year the bubble burst, and Suharto had forgotten one thing: democracy.

Not only does absolute power corrupt absolutely; it destroys a man's sense of his own fallibility, his ability to leave the stage at the appointed moment. A ruler's greatest disservice is to leave no obvious and credible successor.

Thus it has been with Suharto. He has endowed Indonesia with a middle class. But the history of middle classes the world over is that, sooner or later, they demand a say in running things. He has been intermittently ill but has made no gesture to mortality, securing his re-election to the Presidency only two months ago. He has seen his economy descend into chaos, but has been unable to recognise that the problem is of his own making.

His last chance, with the financial markets and the International Monetary Fund at his door, lay in the government he appointed in March. It might have been an attempt to prepare the future without him, containing figures of probity and sound economic credentials. Instead it was stuffed with cronies. Unfortunately economic collapse has drained what was left of public loyalty.

No longer are the people afraid: any evil is lesser than Suharto. That is the vice in which President Suharto is caught. The army made him. The army is now the arbiter of his fate.

Suharto's future depends on the military out of which he grew. The army made him. It is now the arbiter of his fate



President Suharto: His mastery lies in playing one rival off against another



- ① Hutomo Mandala Putra, also known as Tommy or sometimes Toshiba; estimated worth \$600m, much earned from the franchise for the national “Timor” car.
- ② Sigit Harjojudanto, estimated worth \$450m.
- ③ President Suharto.
- ④ Bambang Trihatmodjo, estimated worth \$3bn.
- ⑤ The late first lady Tien Suharto, who died in April 1996.
- ⑥ Siti Hardianti Rulmana, also known as Tutur, worth some hundreds of millions of dollars, much made as an “agent” smoothing the way for foreign companies investing in Indonesia.

Anger at continuing arms trade

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

MORE THAN 50 batches of British arms have been sold to Indonesia since Labour announced its new “ethical” foreign policy, it was confirmed yesterday.

The Suharto regime in Jakarta, where riots have raged since six students were shot dead during a demonstration on Tuesday, has been condemned across the world. Many more people have been killed in riots which followed the shootings.

British ministers say they are “concerned” about the situation and are monitoring it, but they have turned down just

seven export licence applications for arms since May 1997, while approving 56.

Yesterday, the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, denied that Britain was breaching its policy of not exporting arms which might be used for internal repression. He said: “Sadly it appears to be the case that some of the equipment being used against those rioters is sold from Britain. It would not have been sold under the new criteria we brought in and under which we have refused seven licences.”

“There has been a big difference in what we would sell. We have made quite clear that we will not sell equipment that

will be used for internal repression.”

“The fact that Europe was watching, visiting and monitoring the situation in Indonesia amounted to important diplomatic pressure, he said. The only picture of Mr Cook featured in his first annual report on human rights shows him shaking hands with President Suharto.

Yesterday, MPs increased pressure on ministers to allow parliamentary scrutiny of arms sales and for full details to be disclosed. Even now, it is not possible to tell what arms have been sold to Indonesia because only broad categories are given. Fighter jets are in the same category as crash helmets and

flamethrowers are listed alongside safety flares.

David Heath, Liberal Democrat MP for Somerset and Frome, said the system of releasing information was hopeless: “You can’t tell whether what is being sold is a packet of screws or an armoured car.”

Ann Chwyd, Labour MP for Cynon Valley, said Hawk jets given licences under the Tories were being delivered to Indonesia this month. The Government should “presume against” all arms exports to the regime, she said. “Indonesia has a corrupt, rotten government with a terrible record on human rights and we should not be selling arms there.”

Chief Rabbi gives his blessing to the joys of kosher sex

By Paul McCann

THE CHIEF RABBI, Dr Jonathan Sacks, has shocked the conservative Jewish community by backing the author of a book which broadens the kinds of sex permitted for Orthodox Jews.

The book, *Kosher Sex*, and its author, Rabbi Shmuel Boteach, have already been criticised by the highly influential head of London's Rabbinical court and the chairman of the United Synagogue's council of Rabbis. Yet Dr Sacks's office told today's *Jewish Chronicle* that

Rabbi Boteach is: “One of the more creative and imaginative talents of our community [who] has been prepared to take risks in order to communicate an authentic Jewish message to a new generation.”

Kosher Sex argues that the rabbinical line restricting sex to the missionary position represents advice, not Jewish law, and that other practices are permissible if they increase intimacy between a married couple. It also examines the Jewish laws covering oral sex and masturbation. Rabbi Boteach, American-

born founder of the I'Chaim Society, previously courted controversy with a book titled *The Jewish Guide to Adultery*. He argues that as the only religion which specifically encourages sex for pleasure, Jews need not be squeamish about sex.

It had been reported that Dr Sacks was going to ban the book.

Some conservative leaders of the Orthodox community claim the Rabbi is wrong and that he trivialises and sensationalises sex. Rabbi Yisroel Fine, chairman of the United Synagogue's Rabbinical Council, told the



Sacks: supporting book

Jewish Chronicle: “Some of the views he expresses are authentic and sound from a rabbinical point of view, some are not.”

Some observers of Jewish Orthodoxy believe the Chief Rabbi's decision is prompted by his concerns about Jews marrying outside the faith.

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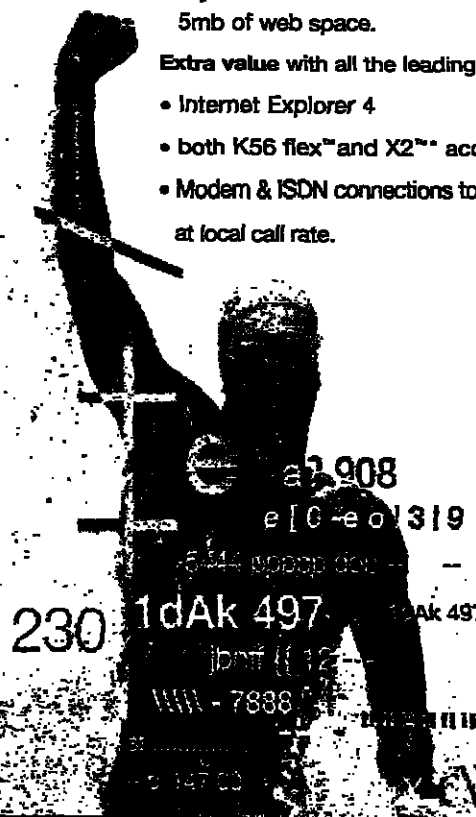
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Cancer drug could save thousands more lives

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

THE WORLD'S most effective anti-cancer drug has been underprescribed to women with breast cancer because it has been perceived to be too kind to be of any use. Twenty thousand extra lives a year worldwide could be saved if tamoxifen were more widely used.

Results from a global study of 37,000 women treated with the drug, the largest randomised study of any cancer treatment, showed that twice as many lives could be saved if tamoxifen were used twice as widely. If all the women who could benefit from the drug in Britain were prescribed it, an extra 1,000 lives a year in this country would be saved, scientists said yesterday.

Tamoxifen, which blocks the action of the hormone oestrogen, is prescribed to one million women worldwide immediately after surgery for breast cancer but could benefit hundreds of thousands more. Oestrogen can cause any breast cancer cells remaining after surgery or chemotherapy to proliferate.

Britain has led the world in prescribing the drug to post-menopausal women but there is still a belief that it is ineffective in younger, pre-menopausal women, unnecessary in those who have had chemotherapy or in whom the cancer has not spread beyond the breast, and is not needed for more than one to two years rather than the recommended five years.

Professor Richard Peto of Oxford



Self-examination (left), helps women detect lumps and catch malignancies early; research has shown that the drug tamoxifen, as well as saving lives of cancer victims, can be used as a preventative measure
Photograph: John Lawrence

and of blood clots in the lungs, the drug prevented 30 times more deaths than it caused. In the UK it costs £200 for a five-year course.

However, the findings only apply to women with hormone-sensitive breast cancer, 20,000 of the 30,000 new cases each year in the UK. In women who do not have hormone sensitive cancer - a quarter of those over 50 and half under 50 - the balance between the risks and benefits of tamoxifen remains unclear.

Professor Rory Collins, a study co-ordinator, said: "The best bet for those women is to get themselves into a randomised trial of tamoxifen."

The findings do not apply to the prevention of a first breast cancer in high-risk women, which is the subject of a separate trial. United States researchers decided to end the American arm of that trial last month after results showed the drug reduced the risk of a first breast cancer by 45 per cent. Half the women in the random trial were not on tamoxifen, and it was felt that it was unethical to keep them off the drug. British researchers this week decided to continue with the trial because they said there were still unanswered questions.

University said that that view was wrong on all four counts and that clinical practice must change. "Tamoxifen is already saving more lives than any other cancer drug in the world," he

said. In the UK, the drug was already saving 2,000 lives a year. Professor Peto added: "Often you can save more lives by taking seriously what you know than with a new discovery that may

not be relevant for 20, 30 or 40 years." Tamoxifen was discovered by British scientists 25 years ago but gathering the evidence of its benefits has taken decades. Professor Peto said that

doctors had been slow to accept the drug because it was not toxic like other cancer drugs and they had believed that there was no gain without pain. The latest findings, published in

The Lancet, involved assembling data from 55 trials in 15 countries. Although the results showed small increases in the risk of endometrial cancer (of the lining of the womb)

BBC in battle to safeguard TV integrity

By Janine Gibson
Media Correspondent

THE BBC is reviewing its rules on the production of documentaries after a series of embarrassing revelations which questioned the truth behind high-profile television investigations.

A senior management group, chaired by Phil Harding, the BBC's controller of editorial policy, and including representatives from the BBC's six factual departments, is examining the corporation's Producers' Guidelines. According to insiders, the group is looking to see if there are lessons to be learnt from recent scandals.

Of most concern is the use of "reconstruction" within a documentary, where producers re-stage events that they believe to have taken place.

Recent revelations about the use of this technique have called into question whether viewers can believe what they see on screen.

Channel 4's documentary *Rogue Males* was revealed to have constructed and reconstructed events for dramatic effect. This was swiftly followed by an acknowledgement from the BBC that its popular series *The Driving School* featured some "reconstructed" material. Perhaps most seriously, last week Carlton came under fire for allegedly manufacturing evidence in an award-winning documentary about drug smuggling, *The Connection*.

The BBC's Producers' Guidelines, which are issued to both in-house and external producers, state that "reconstructions should be identified clearly so that no-one is misled."

Repeated labelling may be necessary to achieve this.

But the BBC's factual programme producers, who are spread across several departments throughout the country, are understood to feel that interpretation of the guidelines varies across the BBC.

An insider said: "The BBC has to decide whether the guidelines themselves need to be rewritten or clarified, or whether it's a case of reiterating firmly to producers what the rules are. It's all about consistency: if you talk to all the factual departments, you get a different sense from each of what is acceptable."

The BBC is not alone in considering the need for tighter guidelines. Documentary producers agree that across the industry, the "fine line" dividing acceptable reconstruction of a verifiable event and "faking it" is being examined.

A senior industry figure said: "It doesn't matter if the programme is a 'docu-soap' or an investigation... If an event is reconstructed, then the viewer must somehow be made aware of that." A respected documentary producer added: "It is crucial that the credibility of documentaries isn't undermined."

After an investigation into the production of *Rogue Males*, Channel 4 issued an apology to viewers for misleading them and restated to staff that all reconstructions must be identified.

Steve Hewlett, Channel 4's head of factual programmes and features, said yesterday: "Television has a relationship with its audience that is based on trust... It is incumbent on all programme makers to nurture and maintain that relationship."

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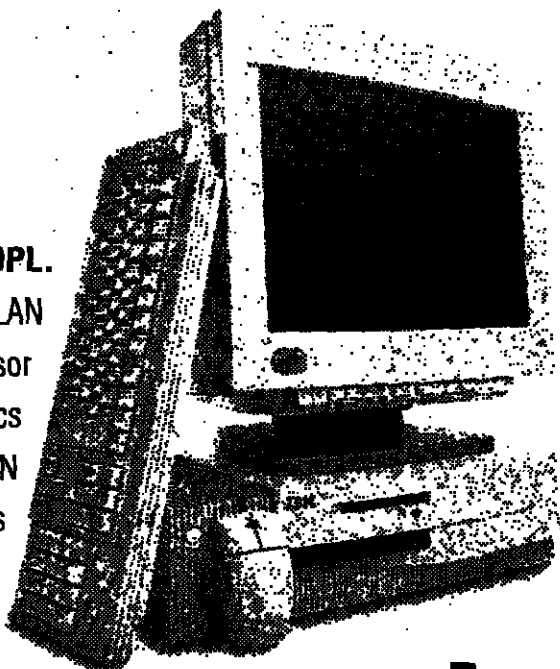
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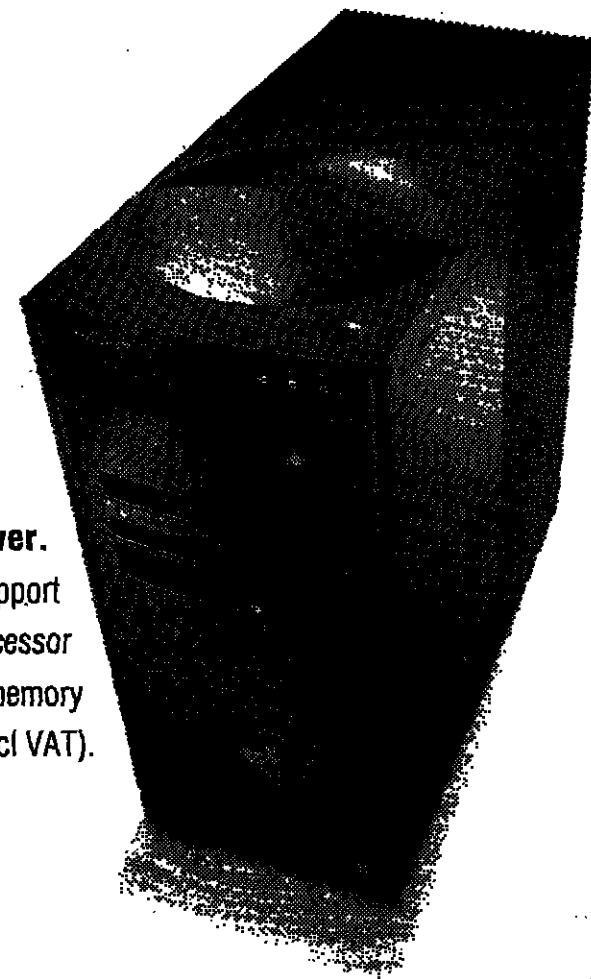
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G8 meeting in Birmingham: Blair's hopes for a laid-back atmosphere and new agenda have been set back by three crises from Asia

New-look summit dominated by old-style troubles

By Rupert Cornwell

IT WAS supposed to have been a new-look summit - with a sharply narrowed agenda, and much time spent in a rural retreat, allowing leaders of the world's eight leading powers to step back a moment and consider the Big Picture. Some hope.

When Tony Blair welcomes his seven guests to Birmingham today for the annual G8 summit, three major concerns from Asia threaten to dominate proceedings: the continuing financial crisis in the region, the worsening turmoil in Indonesia - the planet's fourth most populous country - and, above all, the prospect that Pakistan will respond in kind to India's nuclear tests this week and escalate what is already the sub-continent's most dangerous arms race in its history.

Behind them looms a scarcely less daunting set of issues: the state of near war in the Serbian province of Kosovo, fresh steps to reduce the debt burden that is choking the world's poorest countries, and the Middle East. And, of course, the two subjects which Mr Blair once promised would be the centrepiece of the occasion: international crime and how to create new jobs in an ever more automated and electronic era.

To some extent, Mr Blair has succeeded in changing the format after last year's gathering in Denver, Colorado, where "declaration diplomacy" plucked



Birmingham barmaid Roseanne Kellegher pulls a pint of English bitter from a selection specially named to commemorate the G8 summit

Photograph: Kieran Doherty

new depths of absurdity. This 24th such summit since former president Giscard d'Estaing inaugurated the tradition in France in 1975 will, for once, be without parallel sessions of finance and foreign ministers, which further encumbered proceedings.

These were held a week ago in London. As a result, the final communiqué from the leaders of the United States, Russia, Japan,

France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy and Canada was a modest eight pages long. They will spend virtually the whole of tomorrow at the retreat of Weston Park. But their minds may very well be in Asia.

Most urgent of all, the eight will do their utmost to persuade Pakistan not to carry out nuclear tests of its own. More problematic is the matter of retali-

atory sanctions against India. The US and Japan have already acted, but Russia and Britain, among others, oppose such retaliation. The summit would convey "the dismay of the international community", Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said yesterday. Britain's job as host was to find "the maximum unity" on the sanctions issue.

But Indonesia, and the re-

sulting further unrest in Asian financial markets, will come a close second, with the crucial unknown of just how far the eight will publicly express their private conviction that President Suharto should step down quickly, if that is the best hope of restoring order. The G-8 will again oppose any reversion to protectionism by countries embroiled in the crisis.

The leaders are also under

intense pressure to take concrete steps to reduce the debts of the poorest countries - if not to cancel them outright, then at least to ensure they do not find themselves repaying more old debt than they are receiving in new aid. But the International Monetary Fund and Germany in particular are adamant that there is no point in forgiving debt until countries stop wasting the fi-

nanical resources they do have. That line does not go down well with international aid and human rights groups - and even worse with the demonstrators who will be making the same point this weekend outside Birmingham's International Convention Centre where the G8 is meeting. Mr Blair has promised "concrete measures" to reduce debt, but would give no details.

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Britain attacks US over evasion of cuts in greenhouse gases

By Michael McCarthy
Environment Correspondent

A SERIOUS split between the United States and Britain over how to tackle global warming emerged yesterday on the eve of the G8 summit in Birmingham.

The dispute, which sets President Bill Clinton against Tony Blair and the other European Union leaders, could threaten the international agreement on climate change painfully reached between nearly 150 countries at Kyoto, in Japan, last December. An hour has been set aside tomorrow morning specifically for the G8 heads of government to discuss it.

Their differences became clear yesterday when Michael Meacher, the environment minister, warned that the Americans, the world's biggest emitters of the principal gas causing the greenhouse effect, carbon dioxide (CO₂), must not be able to buy their way completely out of the CO₂ cuts they agreed to at Kyoto.

The Americans are seeking to do this through the system of internationally tradeable emissions permits discussed at the Kyoto meeting, which allows countries that have easily met

their obligations to cut greenhouse gases to sell off the surplus to other nations as "permits to pollute". Some Eastern European countries whose economies have collapsed, such as Russia, will have massive notional "pollution surpluses" under the treaty.

The US wants to be able to meet all the cuts it has promised by buying up permits, so that "reductions" in its CO₂ output would be merely on paper, while its factories and motor vehicles continued pumping out exhaust gases at an undiminished rate.

Britain and the countries of the EU will not accept this. Mr Meacher made clear yesterday, and will be pressing for at least 50 per cent of the US's promised CO₂ cuts to be real rather than paper reductions.

He pointed out that the US had 4 per cent of the world's population and 25 per cent of its greenhouse gas emissions. "That cannot continue," he said.

Addressing a meeting on climate change and the G8 summit at the House of Commons, Mr Meacher said: "It is certainly our view in Europe that there should be a limit on the proportion of cuts that countries can achieve through

emissions trading, although I know this is challenged in America." The limit should be not more than 50 per cent, he said, and the countries of the EU would be proposing this formally at a meeting next month.

In the meantime, he said, it would be raised at this weekend's G8 meeting, adding: "I am sure that the European heads of government will be pressing the point."

Mr Meacher was given backing from his Tory predecessor as environment minister, John Gummer, who said: "You cannot expect developing countries to come on board if the major polluter in the world fails to put its own house in order."

A leading American environmentalist, Philip Clapp, head of the National Environmental Trust, said success at the G8 summit depended on Mr Blair and the other EU leaders. "Will they make it clear to the President that they expect action on the part of the US?" he asked. "There's a lot of talk and no action. The US is sending a signal that the Clinton administration has no intention of getting any reductions. It has not proposed one domestic measure since Kyoto to reduce carbon dioxide in any fashion."

'Poor 8' urge summit leaders to cancel Third World debts

By Louise Jury

A FEW last-minute hitches marred preparations yesterday for the G8 summit which begins in Birmingham today. Four of the summit nations' flags were stolen in an overnight raid. The thieves also removed four 10ft poles from which the flags had been hung.

Despite a torrent of rain, several hundred square feet of yellow and curling grass were discovered alongside the A45 route which will bring President Bill Clinton into the city. The grass was quickly dealt with - spray-painted green. The flags took a little longer to resolve, but Birmingham City Council was confident yesterday that it would find replacements.

As the white and mainly male faces of the G8 nations arrived in convoys, representatives of what the charity Christian Aid has called "the Poor 8" got their chance to speak. Aid agencies and charities operating as the Jubilee 2000 coalition have joined forces to ask for a one-off can-

International flags fly in Birmingham for the summit
Photograph: News Team International

cellation of Third World debts to mark the new millennium.

Organisers of a demonstration tomorrow are hoping that it could attract up to 50,000 people - the biggest rally on a development issue since Live Aid - and force the G8 nations to act. Germany promised aid agencies that it would put the issue at the top of the summit agenda. Martin Drewry, of Christian Aid, said: "It is one of those moments when world history starts to happen. It is a unique opportunity."

Tales about the effects of Third World debt were told by representatives from Tanzania and Nicaragua, Jamaica and Bangladesh. Nunu Kidane, from Ethiopia, spoke for them all: "We would like to appeal to the G8 to give a chance to future generations... give new hope by cancelling the debts by the year 2,000."

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Claims about HIV and babies are proved false

By Charles Arthur
Science and Technology Editor

A RE-EXAMINATION of data on babies that appear to have "cleaned out" HIV from their systems shows that such claims are false. The dramatic finding shows that "transient" infection with the virus that causes AIDS is probably a mirage caused by sloppy laboratory practice, according to a team of American scientists.

Their findings, published today, offer both good and bad news in the war against HIV. The study of 41 apparent cases of "transient" HIV infection indicates that transmission of the virus from mother to child occurs at a slightly lower rate than estimated - as the researchers reckon that the children were never in fact infected.

Their analysis, based on detailed genetic examinations of the samples, shows that the positive results were instead caused by mislabelling or by laboratory contamination.

However, the work also squashes the idea that some virologists had been developing, which was that something in children's metabolisms might be able to defeat the virus, which gradually overwhelms the body's immune system. Using that theory as a basis, they suggested, could lead to a cure for the disease.

"I don't think people were hanging their hopes on this being the answer," said Clive Loveday, professor of retrovi-

rology at the Royal Free Hospital in London.

He was not involved in the new study, published today in the journal *Science*. But he commented: "I've never seen any proof of such 'transient' cases, and there's been no real explanation of why the virus should disappear."

The work shows again that where HIV is concerned, laboratory work is occasionally suspect. In 1995 *The Independent* revealed that the claim that a Manchester man in 1954 was the "first case" of AIDS was false, because the version of the virus found was a modern mutation. That was subsequently blamed on contaminated instruments in the pathology laboratory.

Today's finding offers slim hope for HIV-infected mothers. Roughly 14 per cent of babies born to HIV-infected mothers are themselves infected. But in 1995, a paper published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* claimed that in a number of cases, HIV-positive babies later tested HIV-negative.

The new paper re-examines 41 cases of "transient" infection which turned up in five separate studies of 1,561 HIV-infected infants and their mothers. By examining the genetic components of the HIV samples in detail, it shows that there are no cases where the virus identified in mother and child is unambiguously identical - as it should be if it was transmitted through the blood.

Instead, the scientists think

that the cause is either mislabelling in the laboratory - so that HIV-positive samples taken from others were mistakenly allocated to a child - or contamination when the "amplification" process, used to identify the genetic material of HIV, was carried out.

DNA amplification is one of the most powerful diagnostic methods available to scientists performing gene testing, but it is so sensitive that it is easily contaminated by tiny amounts carried in the air or on laboratory instruments. That could give rise to "false positives". But when the child was examined subsequently, no HIV would be found - giving the appearance of "transient" infection.



The Very Rev John Threadgold, Dean of Chichester, coming face-to-face with himself yesterday in the form of a newly carved gargoyle on the cathedral wall, for which he provided the inspiration
Photograph: Solent News and Photo Agency

Modern men get the blues in a woman's world

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

THE feminisation of society is making men gloomy, according to a study. Depression is rising in men and falling in women and the explanation may lie with the change in gender roles.

Polash Shajahan and Jonathan Cavanagh, from Royal Edinburgh Hospital, compared the rate of admissions for men and women with depression between 1980 and 1995. For women it fell 13 per cent and rose 13 per cent for men. Although far more women were admitted than men, the gap between the sexes narrowed. In 1980 twice as many women were hospitalised for depression as men, compared with 50 per cent more in 1995.

The authors suggest in the *British Medical Journal* that changes in society over the past 20 years have improved the mental health of women while shifting some of the psychological burden they have historically borne on to men.

Full-time jobs for men are declining, while more women are finding part- and full-time work. The result is declining social status for men as they lose their role as the sole financial provider and increasing isolation as they lose the comradeship of the workplace. The

increase in women working has meant more have been able to benefit from the advantages that work brings, previously enjoyed by men.

Previous studies identified a growing fear of failure among men, and the rise in male suicides over the past decade is well established. Women are opting for higher education in greater numbers than men and obtaining the qualifications they need in a world in which the job market for those without qualifications is shrinking.

Psychologists say work plays a more important part in a man's image of himself and its loss has graver consequences. A woman might say she is married with two children and a dental hygienist.

A man would just say he is a dental hygienist. Because they use their jobs as a source of identity, if they lose them it is more difficult because they have put all their emotional eggs in one basket.

"They pay lip service to New Man but they don't want to be seen as wimps," one psychologist said.

The authors consider whether the apparent increase in depression in men may be the result of a change in the way GPs treat depression or in the readiness of men to seek and accept psychiatric help.

DAILY POEM

Emu Hunt

By John Kinsella

They'd drive them down this stretch of track
At breakneck speed, and then two guys
Hiding behind those thick-set wattle trees
Would snap the rope tight at breast height
And toss them arse-up, leave them sprawling
Bulbous-eyed, with claws grasping at thin air,
Necks twitching like headless snakes
Waiting for the calm of sunset, tarantismic
Feathers fanning the ground like chopper blades
Skewed off-centre, the staccato of bullets
Sprayed from rapid-fire semi-automatics,
Reverberating through the forest canopy,
Meat ants driving hastily towards the corpses.

This week's poems celebrate the work of John Kinsella, who was born in Perth, Western Australia, in 1963, and mark the simultaneous publication of his *Poems 1980-1994* (Bloodaxe, £9.95) and his new volume, *The Hunt* (Bloodaxe, £7.95). This poem appears in *The Hunt*.



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NHS patients at risk from millennium bug

By Anthony Bevis
Political Editor

PATIENTS could be at risk in at least 45 NHS Trusts, who have reported they are "not confident that all their clinical equipment would continue functioning normally in the year 2000".

A National Audit Office report on the threat posed by the millennium computer bug last night prompted swift reaction from the Government, which put "rigorous new measures" in place "to ensure that patient care and safety are not compromised". But fears that the action being taken is too little, too late, are compounded by the facts: that last night's report excludes Scotland and Wales; that 28 per cent of NHS Trusts in England - 118 trusts in all - did not even bother to respond to a NAO survey; and summarised results of a survey by the NHS Executive will not be known until the middle of next month, more than 10 weeks after the deadline for returns.

Last night's report also disclosed that 16 of the 100 Health Authorities in England ignored the NAO investigation, and 37 of the authorities that did bother to reply said "they had not yet collected information on GP practices in their area". Of the authorities who replied, 26 said "they were not confident that GPs' systems would be year 2000 compliant in time".

It is estimated that more than 8,000 English GP practices are computerised, with as many as 29 million patient records dependent to some extent on IT systems.

The NAO last night refused to name the authorities or trusts that had not bothered to respond to its survey. Asked about Scotland and Wales, the NAO said the implications of its report would be picked up by the Scottish and Welsh offices.

All computers and clinical equipment are at risk from the millennium bug: the inability of some programs to distinguish between the year 1900 and 2000, when two-digit years go to

00 from the end of next year.

The NAO report noted that the NHS Executive had already told all trusts and authorities "that it is impossible to predict the seriousness of malfunctions but in extreme circumstances failure or malfunction of equipment could even put patients' lives at risk".

Against that background, only 63 NHS trusts, a fifth of those who replied to the questionnaire, told the NAO that their clinical equipment would be year 2000 compliant by the end of this year - on target for the NHS executive deadline.

More than a third of those who replied, 106 trusts, said they would need to work through to the end of April to complete the programme.

"One-fifth of NHS trusts (37) were not confident that they would succeed in ensuring that their clinical equipment would continue functioning normally in year 2000," the report said. It then added: "The likelihood of failure in medical devices is at present unknown."



Jean Chrétien (left) talking to Tony Blair at 10 Downing Street yesterday, during the Canadian Prime Minister's visit to sign a trade agreement with the European Union
Photograph: Paul Vincent/AP

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Blair offers compromise over union recognition

By Colin Brown
and Barrie Clement

TONY BLAIR is offering a series of concessions to "old Labour" over union recognition to defuse one of the most difficult issues faced by the Prime Minister since Labour came to power.

Downing Street has conceded that collective bargaining should be compulsory where more than half of any workforce are union members. Mr Blair has also agreed there should be no test of minimum union membership before a recognition ballot is held.

And while unions will be asked to accept a 40 per cent threshold for ballots for trade union recognition, it is understood that the figure may be left out of the main Bill and included in regulations to enable it to be reviewed after a reasonable period.

Senior ministerial sources said that could leave open the option of reducing the thresh-

old to 35 per cent after a year, if a higher threshold proved unacceptable, without having to return to Parliament to amend primary legislation.

"If it is going to be under review, it will be in regulations. After a year you could change it to 35 per cent. That is being discussed," said one source. In a further compromise, there could be exemptions for firms employing fewer than 20 staff.

The CBI had wanted a 50 per cent threshold. But Labour MPs warned the Government at a meeting with Mr Monks at the Commons this week that there would be a big revolt if the Cabinet tried to impose a 40 per cent threshold without some sweeteners for the unions.

The compromise was thrashed out after John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, angrily stepped in when it was reported that the 40 per cent threshold had been agreed. Mr Prescott's friends last night said the Deputy Prime Minister would back the com-

promise, if it won the support of the TUC.

The package was approved by the Cabinet after the draft White Paper "Fairness at Work" was outlined by Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade. A senior source said the White Paper was likely to present the "pros and cons" of the 40 per cent figure.

The Deputy Prime Minister made it clear to Mr Blair that it was a "crunch" issue for him, and the deal appears to have reached approval from both sides. The Prime Minister's official spokesman said: "Every contribution endorsed the plan that Margaret Beckett outlined, including Mr Prescott."

While some sources emphasised the influence of Mr Prescott, others pointed to the patient diplomacy of John Monks, TUC general secretary.

While the CBI wanted to allow employers to define the "constituencies" for ballots on recognition, Mr Monks has successfully argued for a "neutral"

system in which both sides attempt to agree, with recourse to an independent arbiter if that is not possible.

The TUC leader has also secured a compromise on the size of company to be excluded from the legislation. The CBI wanted organisations with fewer than 50 workers to be exempt, but that limit has come down to 20.

Mr Monks welcomed signs that the White Paper would be published next week and said that while some trade unionists would be concerned by the 40 per cent threshold, the White Paper should be judged as a whole.

Sources close to Mr Blair said the Prime Minister did not want a confrontation with the unions. "He wanted an amicable agreement and that is what we've got," said a source.

Mr Prescott insisted that final approval of the draft White Paper should not be given until next week, after agreement with Mr Monks. Talks are continuing, but it could be published next Thursday.

Women fight to sit in Welsh assembly

By Louise Jury

THE Labour Party faces bitter wrangling this weekend over moves to ensure that women get an equal share of the seats in the new Welsh assembly. Female campaigners fear that Welsh men may be intent on snatching the chance of a more representative assembly.

The principle of the four female MPs and two MEPs are spearheading efforts to ensure a gender balance in the assembly by "twinning" constituencies, as is being done in Scotland for its new parliament.

Under the twinning procedure, members choose a man and a woman to represent constituencies that are "paired" according to their likely winnability. But constituencies angry that twinning would remove their autonomy over candidate selection have proposed an alternative selection process which will be debated at the party's Welsh conference tomorrow.

They are claiming backing from the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, who has said that twinning may be illegal under sexual discrimination legislation. Under the alternative, all

constituencies would choose a man and a woman and the party's selection board, which vets proposed candidates, would decide who got the seat. Proponents argue roughly equal numbers of men and women should be adopted, achieving the same aim as twinning but more democratically.

Garry Owen, a Welsh executive member and president of the Pontypridd constituency which has proposed the alternative, said it was "practical, workable and flexible". Twinning was divisive, he said. It could mean, for example, that a larger constituency could disenfranchise a smaller neighbour.

Jeff Hopkins, Llanelli constituency secretary, said they were in favour of equal opportunities, but there was not a big pool of women available in Wales because they had not taken part in politics before. "In terms of politics [women] need education ... so that they understand that there's a system there that they can use," he said.

However, several party members said it was "traditional" constituencies in places such as the valleys who were opposing twinning. "The only way

[the Pontypridd alternative] can achieve a gender balance is by a barter with all the old power brokers," one said.

Chris Roberts, of the "twin to win" campaign, said half the constituencies had signed up in support and they believed many union votes would go their way.

"Given the democratic deficit as far as women are concerned, we think the slight disadvantages of twinning are worth the great advantages it will secure in producing a truly representative assembly," he added.

Julie Morgan, MP for Cardiff North, pointed out only four out of forty MPs were women, three of whom were selected from the now-banned all-women shortlists; 19 per cent of councillors were female, a lower proportion than in England and Scotland. Ensuring there were women in the new assembly was a way of changing the "totally male-dominated" politics in Wales, she said.

The Welsh Equal Opportunities Commission is currently investigating the "substantial under-representation" of women in Welsh political life and intends to present its findings on the problem to the Government.

Last votes for 'spoiler' candidates

NEW POWERS to outlaw "spoiler" candidates like the "Lateral Democrat" who took 10,000 votes in one election were announced by the Home Office yesterday.

A new Bill will also allow parties to print their emblems beside their candidates' names to "make it easier for voters to distinguish between candidates and parties", the Home Office said.

The changes will be possible under a new register of political parties to be set up for the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly and the European Parliament.

The new reforms will use proportional representation and parties putting forward lists of candidates will have to register at Companies House.

Under the proposed laws a prospective candidate would need a registered party's permission to use its name or "any form of words which might lead voters to associate the candidate with that party", the Home Office said.

Registration under the new Bill will be voluntary but the Home Office expects "any serious political party" to register in order to protect its name.

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Misery of dolphins trained to go to war

By Charles Arthur
Science and Technology Editor

DOLPHINS trained by the Soviet military to be "watchdogs" at naval installations, and to lay or identify mines, are suffering in inadequate dolphinariums around the world, or have died in transit, according to a report.

The study, published today by the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), based in Bath, also highlighted the fact that military use of dolphins is still a priority for the US, which, like the Soviet Union, first began experiments with the mammals in the 1950s.

The emphasis the US places on the work was demonstrated last week, when the WDCS computer was the target of a hacker based in a US naval installation, apparently seeking advance sight of the report.

The report tells a dismal tale of the fate of 43 bottlenose dolphins which were trained by the Russians and lived in the Black Sea. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, many

were sold to dolphinariums or theme-parks in Malta, Cyprus, Turkey and Argentina. Frances Clarke, the WDCS's campaigns co-ordinator, said: "We want British tourists to be aware of the conditions these dolphins suffer, and urge them not to visit these institutions."

Many of the animals, reckoned to be as smart as humans in some regards, died in poor facilities at receiving airports. Others were taken to swimming-pools or harbour pens. In all, of the 43 exported from the Black Sea, 34 died thanks to poor travelling conditions and facilities in captivity. "Russia still has dolphins held at Sebastopol, but because of a lack of funding they aren't using them for anything except search and recovery in the port," said Miss Clarke. "But the US Navy has a very intensive programme, and isn't going to phase it out, because dolphins proved useful in the Gulf."

The US Navy is also using dolphins to lay and detect mines, and monitor submarines. During the Gulf war, it used them to search



US Navy divers training a dolphin, used to detect intruders. Dolphins used by the Russians have suffered since the Soviet Union broke up

Photograph: FSP

ahead of ships for mines. Since the 1950s, military scientists have tried to find ways to exploit their capabilities. Experiments are thought to include carrying cameras and mines.

The WDCS computer security system foiled what it described as a "half-hearted" attempt at hacking. "If you try to put in codes that would take you past the public area of our website, the system automatically tracks you back to your source," said Miss Clarke. "We found the attempt came from a naval military source in the US." The society said US service chiefs admitted the attempt. Miss Clarke said: "There is nothing in the report that would have an impact on the US Navy, although it could be of general interest to them."

Exporters say they are helping to conserve the species through captive breeding programmes but the society said the trade was a commercial venture contributing nothing to conservation. No successful reproduction programme had been established in any of the facilities except at one in Israel. "The export of Black Sea dolphins is simply a disaster for the animals involved," says the report. The WDCS is calling for the return to the wild of the surviving exported dolphins.

Body-parts sculptor has jail term reduced

By Kate Watson-Smyth

THE sculptor Anthony-Noel Kelly, who made legal history by becoming the first person in Britain to be convicted of stealing human body parts, is to be released from prison in the next few days after winning an appeal against sentence.

Kelly had his sentence reduced from nine to three months by the Court of Appeal yesterday. He has already served six weeks in Brixton Prison.

Kelly, 42, a nephew of the Duke of Norfolk, who smiled and raised his eyebrows at the judge's decision, had earlier lost his appeal against conviction.

Lord Justice Rose said the case presented "a difficult sentencing exercise" because it was so unique. "We are prepared to accept that he had no financial motive for doing what he did and that he was primarily motivated by what he regarded as artistic reasons," he said.

But he added that the theft of body parts, albeit comparatively old ones, was something that the public would view with "repugnance" and might have a dissuading effect on the mind of someone who was contemplating donating his body for scientific research.

Kelly's solicitor, Mark Stephens, said the date of his release would have to be worked out with the Prison Service. "With automatic remission, it comes down to about six weeks' imprisonment which is as devastating to him as a year would be to others," he said. "You can imagine the effect on a man with his artistic sensibility."

Kelly's accomplice, Neil Lindsay, 25, who helped to smuggle more than 40 body parts from the Royal College of Surgeons at night in black bins, was also successful in his appeal. His six-month suspended sentence was amended to a two-month suspended sentence.

Lord Justice Rose said that both men were hitherto of good character but that Lindsay was under 21 at the time of the offence and was "persuaded to act as he did by a man who was not only considerably older but who had a considerable force of personality".

They were the first to be convicted of such a theft because previous body-snatchers have been charged with the lesser common law offence of outraging public decency.

At their trial, the jury was told that the body parts were transported by taxi, motorcycle and even Underground train to Kelly's studio in west London where, using rubber moulds, glass fibre and plaster, he created bronze and silver casts.

His scheme was uncovered when Her Majesty's Inspector of Anatomy saw a newspaper photograph of his first exhibition of a bronzed head and torso and contacted police.

Why women like it hot and men keep their cool

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

SCIENTISTS have confirmed what every Woody Allen fan knows - that women are too hot to handle.

Measurements of the temperature of 219 people aged from one to 84 revealed that on average the women were 0.4 degrees Fahrenheit hotter.

Oddly, however, the women had colder hands, which were on average 2.8 degrees cooler than the men's, giving some sci-

entific credence to the saying "cold hands, warm heart."

The finding may explain the commonest bedroom dispute between the sexes - what thickness of duvet to sleep under. The greater difference between the core and skin temperatures in women accounts for their greater propensity to feel the cold. Their cool-blooded male partners are meanwhile forced to swelter under layers they would rather do without.

The researchers from the University of Utah, Salt Lake

City, who report their findings in the *Lancet*, found that women get hotter as their menstrual cycle advances with a higher core temperature in the last 14 days than in the first 14 days. Post-menopausal women over 50 were cooler than pre-menopausal girls under 13.

Weight only made a difference to the temperature of the men. The fatter they were, the lower their core temperature - suggesting that big men really can keep cool.

The risk of a heart attack rises in the two weeks after a cold, suggesting the infection may trigger the attack, researchers have found.

A study of 9,500 people, of whom almost 2,000 had a heart attack, found those who had had a cold in the previous 10 days were at almost three times the risk. The risk declined with the passage of time since the cold.

The authors of the study, published in the *Lancet*, say that inflammation caused by the cold could alter constituents in the blood or tissues which could account for the increase in risk of an attack. Although only 4 per cent of the heart-attack patients in the study had a cold in the preceding two weeks they say their finding could be of great public health interest.

"A better understanding of the role of chronic and acute infections in the aetiology (cause) of acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) may result in new strategies for its prevention and treatment," they say.

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Snub for black police in gallantry awards

By Ian Burrell
Home Affairs Correspondent

TWO black undercover police officers who were shot in the line of duty have been overlooked for gallantry awards in what the Police Federation described as a racist snub which left it "staggered and disgusted".

The officers were seconded from the Metropolitan Police to try and smash a network of crack dealers in the Handsworth area of Birmingham. While posing as drug buyers, they were both shot in a struggle with three men.

Yesterday Mike Bennett, chairman of the Police Federation for the Metropolitan Police area, said the officers deserved the George Medal for Gallantry, the second highest civilian award for gallantry after the George Cross.

He condemned the West Midlands Police's failure to nominate the men, and said: "If it's not racism, it's the biggest case of hypocrisy you will ever come across. I would be in despair if this was a racism incident, but I must tell you that both of the officers concerned think it is."

He said the case was a bad advertisement for the police, and would not help recruit more officers from the ethnic minorities.

Mr Bennett has written to the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, saying he was "staggered and disgusted" at the manner in which the officers were treated.

The officers, who were unarmed and using the cover names Philip and Martin, were attacked while sitting in a parked car in the Soho Road area of Birmingham at 7.30pm one evening in October 1994.

As they waited for a dealer they had arranged to meet they were approached by two men who, after asking for a light, tried to steal the car keys.

In the struggle that followed Philip, the driver, was shot in his calf. Martin attacked the gunman and was also shot in the leg. Philip, despite his injury, rushed to Martin's aid, knocked the gunman down, and sat on him. He was kicked in the face by another man and shot. The attackers ran off but three men were arrested later, and jailed for periods of 12, eight and five years.

The officers are now suing the West Midlands Chief Constable after having to leave the police because of their injuries.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "The Chief Constable and the trial judge in criminal proceedings have already commended both officers for their bravery."



Terry Major-Ball auditioning gnomes yesterday at the Museum of Garden History in London for next week's Chelsea Flower Show

Photograph: Rui Xavier

Old boys' network 'dominates universities'

By Ben Russell
Education Correspondent

AN OLD BOYS' network still dominates Britain's universities, lecturers said yesterday. They condemned vice-chancellors for promoting too

few women to professorships and said that urgent action was needed to redress the balance.

The Association of University Teachers (AUT) published a league table designed to "name and shame" the worst

offenders. Universities and colleges defended their record arguing the table was years out of date. But they acknowledged that men still far outnumbered women in many academic departments.

The AUT survey, based on

figures for 1996, the most recent available, found that men made up 97.5 per cent of professors and 83 per cent of senior lecturers and researchers. Union leaders said female professors were still outnumbered two to one at even the best institutions.

The AUT president, Penny Holloway, said: "We have worked willingly and industriously with vice-chancellors and produced a plethora of good practice guidelines, but worthy words are not enough."

David Triesman, general secretary of the association, singled out art and design courses for criticism. He said: "You can walk through fine art departments and never see a woman. Art departments are some of the most macho, hard-drinking environments you can imagine."

But Professor Elaine Thomas, chairman of the Conference for

Higher Education in Art and Design, which represents department heads, said much progress had been made. She said: "Our fine art department has a 50-50 split and I do think things have started to move and fine art has started to make progress."

"When I was a student there was only one female tutor, and when I started work at Ulster I was the only female lecturer. In the early years it was awful and incredibly lonely, but now far more women come into the system and become role models."

She said that a wave of early retirements across universities in the past two years had brought a rapid change in the make-up of departments.

Other universities also attacked the AUT figures. Plymouth University, condemned by the association as having the

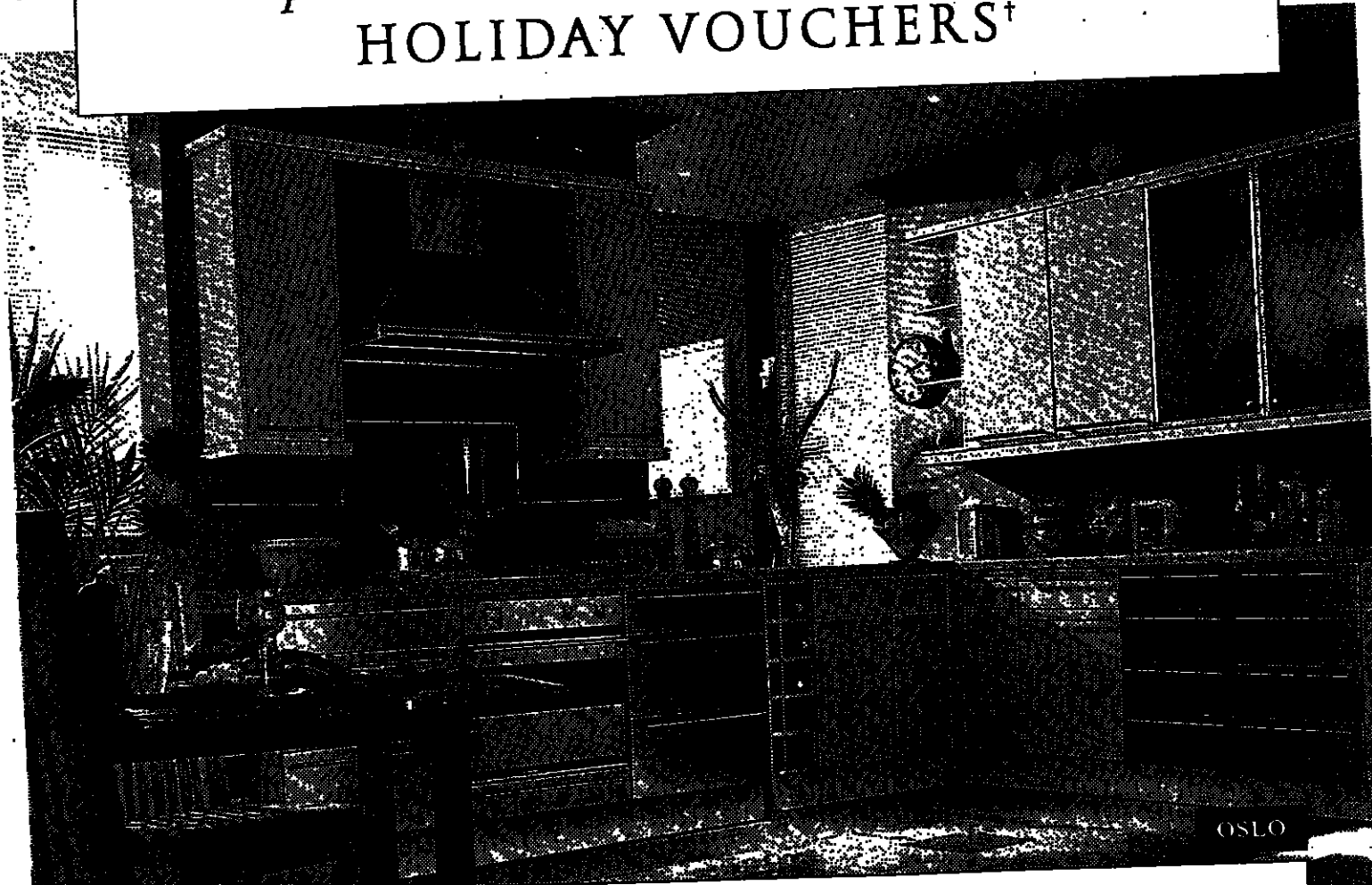
worst ratio of male to female professors at 43 to 1, said the true figure was now 15 to 1. A spokeswoman said: "There has been a deliberate policy in the university. We were aware that things were not right and we decided to do something about it."

Diana Warwick, chief executive of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, which represents university heads, said: "Ever since CVCP's own equal opportunities survey in 1996, we have promoted the importance of action over policy."

The new university standards watchdog was criticised yesterday as being out of touch and a threat to academic freedom. Mr Triesman said the Quality Assurance Agency "is to be run by people whose experience of teaching is either non-existent or should be exhibited on the Antiques Road Show".

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Blaze which killed four was deliberate

A HOUSE fire in which a mother, her two young daughters and a baby-sitter died was started deliberately, police said yesterday.

Lisa Dodgson, 25, her daughters Amy Louise, aged two years and nine months, and nine-month-old Rose Marie Lakey, died in the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle upon Tyne, after the fire broke out behind the front door in their house in the West End of the city. The baby-sitter, Emma Louise Cater, 16, died last night.

It is thought all four were trapped upstairs when the fire began about 5.30am.

Detective Superintendent Derek Storey said: "We believe the fire was deliberate and an accelerant was used at the front door." Police planned to talk to members of Ms Dodge-

son's family and her friends to work out a picture of her lifestyle. "At this moment there is no apparent motive of why this tragic incident has occurred," he said.

"This is a tragic incident in which a young mother aged 25 and two young children died in tragic circumstances." Fifty officers were assigned to the case, he said, and a mobile police incident room would be sited in the street 24 hours a day until officers knew what had happened.

He could not confirm suggestions from neighbours that Ms Dodgson had been pregnant. Police did not know who had been the target for the attack, Mr Storey said. But he added: "I do not think for one moment that anyone would be targeting young infants. It's horrendous two young children

have been robbed of their lives." Police teams were yesterday examining the house, in a terraced row in a run-down area of Denton Burn, and a sniffer dog was also called in.

The windows and doors of the property next door and many other empty houses in the street were boarded up with metal screens to keep out vandals and squatters.

Brendan O'Kane, the Tyne & Wear Fire Brigade Divisional Officer, said: "It was a very severe fire to get through, especially when persons are reported to be trapped inside."

"It is obviously really upsetting for firefighters when they have to pull children from a fire, especially a baby."

"The surviving 16-year-old girl who was in the house was in a very bad way when she went to hospital."

T.rex's ugly cousin is unearthed

SCIENTISTS have discovered the near complete skull of a genuine ugly monster, a wrinkly faced dinosaur with sharp teeth and horns that may have used its face to frighten enemies.

The creature, *Majungatholus atopus*, was a two-legged predator almost 20ft long and a distant cousin of *Tyrannosaurus rex*. It lived near the end of the dinosaurs' reign, 65 to 70 million years ago, on what is now the African island of Madagascar.

Majungatholus had a highly unusual bone structure and features researchers suspect were used to send visual signals to attract potential mates or threaten enemies. Its facial bones were rough and wrinkled, and it had a bony bump above each eye socket which was probably covered with a non-bony horn. The discovery was reported

in the journal *Science Today* by United States researchers. A team led by Professor David Krause, from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, found *Majungatholus*'s remains about 25 miles from Mahajanga, one of Madagascar's largest cities. Professor

Krause said: "This was the most terrific find I have been associated with in more than 25 years field work."

Majungatholus appeared to have been buried during a flood soon after its death, protecting its remains from scavengers and decomposition.

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Clinton and Kohl celebrate airlift miracle

By Imre Karas
in Berlin

GERMANY and the United States pledged to strengthen their kinship forged 50 years ago by building "bridges to the future" in a world where, in the words of President Bill Clinton, "the struggle for freedom never ends".

At an exuberant celebration of the airlift that began half a century ago, 10,000 Berliners cheered the President, swayed to the Bundeswehr Big Band's rhythm-and-blues, and echoed Chancellor Helmut Kohl's profuse thanks.

The venue was Tempelhof airport, a Nazi-era megalith that fell into American hands after the war. On its Tarmac stood yesterday the "Spirit of Freedom", a C-54 converted passenger plane that took the lion's share in the relief of Berlin's hunger. Alongside this craft, the US Air Force had parked its hyper-modern C-17 transporter, the newly christened "Spirit of Berlin".

"We shall never forget the help of our American allies," Mr Kohl vowed. "Now and for ever, our heartfelt gratitude, Mr President."

The recipient of this accolade, keenly aware of hyperbolic standards set by his predecessors, rose to the occasion with a flourish. "Man's soul is like water. From heaven it descends and to heaven it rises," he said, quoting Goethe. "The airlift became a sharing of the soul."

His idol, John F Kennedy, had written his name into the annals with that unforgettable declaration in German: "Ich bin ein Berliner". President Clinton was not to be outdone. The spirit of the city and the miracle of the airlift will live on 100 years from now, he declared. "Berlin bleibt doch Berlin - Berlin will remain Berlin."

Some locals took that as a bitter aside to the developers transforming Potsdamerplatz in the heart of the city into a Manhattan, but the President was surely not troubled by such negative thoughts. The pathos flowed freely, platitudes landed, like the "rain-bombers" of yesterday, once every 90 seconds. "It would be difficult to imagine a better friend or ally than modern Germany," he oozed.

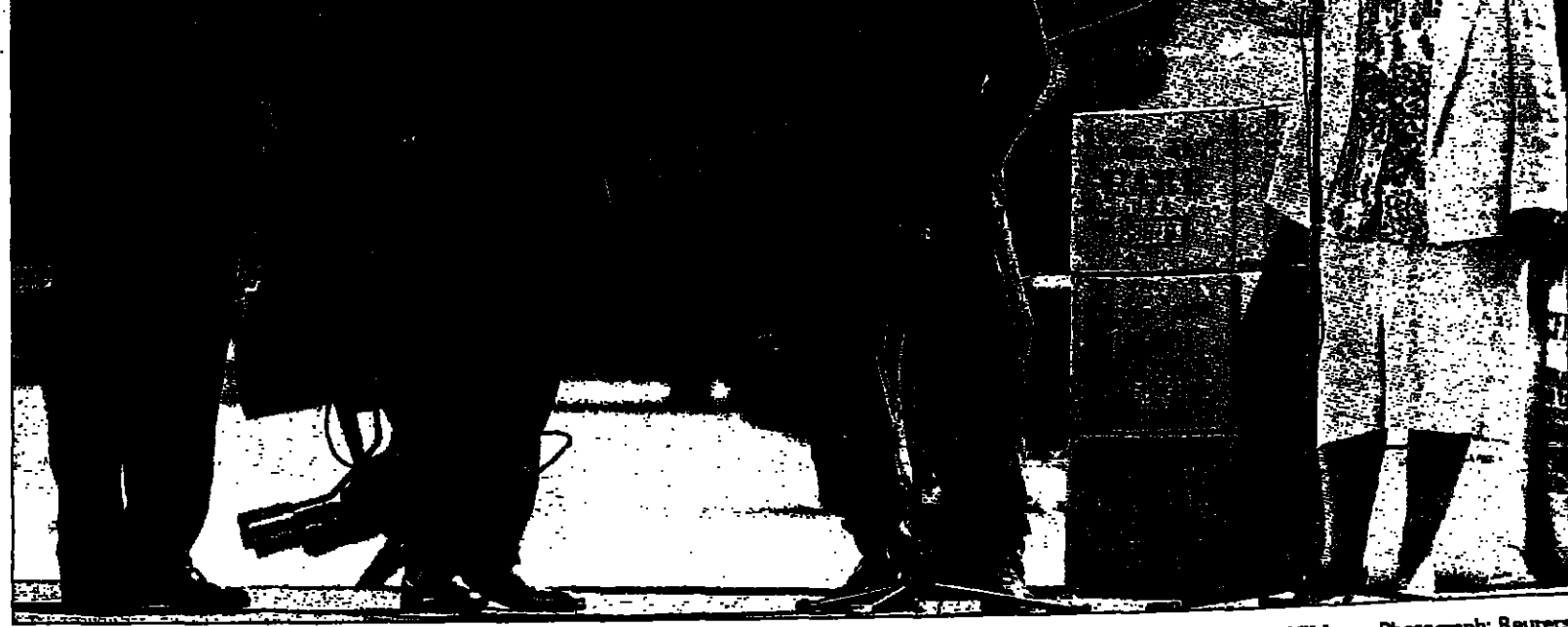
This was a German-American love-in, not to be tainted by any rivalry for affection. Other

heroes of the airlift, notably British airmen, got only a cursory mention. School-children were handed out paper flags of the two countries; the banners fluttering in the breeze were German and American only. For one glorious day, Britain and France had been air-brushed out of history.

But even the thunderous presidential accolade was eclipsed for a moment by the ovation for Colonel Gail Halvorsen, aka the "Candy Bomber". Col Halvorsen had flown in from Utah, admittedly with the help of a young crew, to bask one more time in the adulation of Berliners.

Now 79, the pilot is credited with the idea of dropping Hershey bars attached to tiny parachutes. A showman to the last - he had danced in his fading ancient uniform before the crowd - Col Halvorsen kept his uplifting performance brief: "People can live without having enough to eat. But they cannot live without hope. That's what the airlift meant."

To Gerry Muir, another veteran pilot with 121 sorties out of Wiesbaden during the blockade, flying in and out of Berlin



Marking the airlift yesterday, from left, are Helmut Kohl, Bill Clinton, airlift pilot Gail Halvorsen and Berliner Mercedes Wild

Photograph: Reuters

was just another job, devoid of the epoch-making significance accorded to it today. "During the airlift, I don't think any of us saw how important it was," he said. He had flown a bomber in the war, whose purpose he could never quite fathom, was demobbed and then offered his job

back in 1948. "I wondered why the people in Washington favoured Uncle Joe [Stalin], instead of Adolf. To this day, I don't think we are finished with the Russians yet."

No such hint of doubt was, of course, allowed to mar the ceremony, as the official speak-

ers turned their attention to the relentless advance of Western civilisation in the east. In the words of Chancellor Kohl: "Our goal is to complete the construction of the European house - with a permanent right of residence for our American friends - enabling the family of Euro-

pean nations to live together side by side in lasting peace." Both Mr Kohl and President Clinton spoke at length about the legacy of the Cold War, and the need to integrate the new democracies into Nato and the European Union. "Above all," Mr Kohl said, "we need to en-

hance our relationship with Russia, for only together with Russia can security and stability in Europe be assured."

Jenny, a 12-year-old Berliner, glimpsed a contemporary message in the history of the airlift. "They should feed Africa," she said.

Barry under pressure to quit disaster-zone DC

By Andrew Marshall
in Washington

WHO SHALL rule the New Rome? Which man or woman will gain ultimate power over the city that rules not just the most powerful nation on earth, but which indirectly guides the fortunes of hundreds of millions across the globe? Who will be mayor of Washington DC?

The job is real enough, but that description of it would be to miss anyone who lives in the city. For Washington is far from being the glamorous metropolis at the heart of an empire. "A city that should be America's Paris has become its Cairo," wrote the *New York Times*. Nor is it in control of its own destiny, unlike almost any other such city in the world.

The man whom many blame for this is Marion Barry, mayor of the city for 16 of the past 20 years. This weekend, Mr Barry may decide that four terms is enough.

At a meeting with community representatives and his supporters, he will decide whether to stand in this September's primary. Speculation is building that he will stand aside, perhaps to stand as a councilman, perhaps to retreat to academia.

Enigmatic to the last, he is giving no clues. "I am trying to wind down this decision, so I want to get one final look and a little prayer," Barry said this week. "I have really given this decision serious consideration, and I am really torn between what to do."

The Mayor's years in Washington saw him rise to power spectacularly in the 1970s, before falling just as dramatically when he was caught on camera smoking cocaine in a downtown hotel room in 1990, and jailed. But he bounced back, claiming redemption and a rediscovery of God, and won re-election in 1995.

Washington is a divided city, and few things divide it as much as Mayor Barry. Rock Creek Park, a strip of grass and trees that widens as it pushes north, is a green wedge that splits it

voted him back into office anyway.

But Washington is in trouble. Over the past 25 years, the city of 500,000 has lost about 200,000 residents in a flight to the suburbs. Many of its basic services do not work, its finances (though improving) are chaotic and its public school system is rotten.

Those who blame Barry see him as the maladministrator who created this, playing politics when the city really needed a good manager. Over the past few years Congress has struck back, stripping the mayor of most of its powers, and creating a financial control board which wields more power than mayor and council combined.

Barry's friends would point out that the city had more than its fair share of problems before he arrived, and say that he was never given much of a chance by the white establishment. But pressure is building for a return to self-government, and most realise that while he is in office that will be an impossible goal. His friends have tried to prepare a dignified exit for him.

His opponents are already jockeying for position. Today four of them are expected to pick up their nomination papers: Republican Carol Schwartz and Democrats Jack Evans, Kevin Chavous and Harold Brazill.

In a city that is Democratic to the core, only Evans, Chavous and Brazill have a chance, but if Barry decided to run again, he could well still win re-election.



Barry: still deciding if he will stand for a fifth term

Paris obelisk finally gets its gold cap

PARIS (Reuters) - A gold-leafed pyramid cap was placed on top of an ancient Egyptian obelisk in the heart of Paris yesterday, more than 150 years after the project was first conceived.

The 107ft-tall obelisk, which was carved in the eighth century BC and given to France by an Egyptian viceroy in 1830, stands at the centre of the famous Place de la Concorde.

When the stone monument reached Paris in 1836, experts urged the French authorities to restore the masterpiece to its original splendour by putting a pyramid cap back on the pinnacle.

But it was not until last year that President Jacques Chirac agreed to back the 1.5m franc project as part of celebrations to mark Franco-Egyptian relations.

The 12ft-high hat is built out of bronze and covered with 23.5 carat gold leaf.

French rightists plan alliance

THE leaders of France's two main conservative parties proposed forming an alliance to fight the far right. The Rally for the Republic, the party of President Jacques Chirac, and the Union for French Democracy pledged to reject any compromise with the National Front. The RPR president, Philippe Séguin, and the UDF leader, François Léotard, said the alliance could emerge as early as September. — AP, Paris

Egyptian cult members freed

POLICE freed 12 people detained for believing an unemployed Egyptian was a messiah. Cult members were released after recanting in front of a committee from the highest seat of Sunni Muslim learning. The cult believed Bahaa Eddin Ahmed was a messiah and that the country would be flooded during the first three days of April. — Reuters, Cairo

Gnome-plant blast kills two

TWO people died in an explosion at a garden-gnome factory. Three were injured, one seriously, at the plant near Zielona Gora, western Poland. Gnome production has flourished partly due to demand from Germany. — Reuters, Warsaw

Koala first

AUSTRALIAN researchers announced the birth of the world's first koala from artificial insemination at a sanctuary in Brisbane. The koala, about the size of a jelly-bean, was spotted in its mother's pouch last Tuesday. — Reuters, Sydney

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Chinese round on India over nuclear testing

By Teresa Poole

CHINA yesterday attacked India for its nuclear tests, saying it had shown "outrageous contempt for the common will of the international community". North Korea also said it could revive its nuclear-power programme, because Washington was being too slow supplying promised light-water reactors.

As the rest of the world rounded on Delhi, Peking for the first time also claimed a place on the moral high ground of supposed nuclear respectability. It was "deeply shocked", a foreign ministry statement said. The tests would have "serious consequences to the peace and stability in South Asia and the world at large".

The Indian ambassador to Peking was summoned to hear a protest, and the Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan, phoned his US counterpart, Madeleine Albright, to call for a "clear-cut and firm stance" against India's nuclear programme.

In recent years Peking has more often been heard defending its own right to a modern nuclear armory. China did not halt its own test programme until July 1996, when it conducted its 45th nuclear blast. Peking then implemented a moratorium on testing and in September 1996 signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Since then stories have persisted that China has helped Pakistan develop missile systems and nuclear technology, an allegation denied by both.

India's mistrust of China's relationship with Pakistan is never far from the surface in relations between Asia's two giants. The Press Trust of India news agency said the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, had cited "an atmosphere of distrust" in relations with China in a letter to President Bill Clinton explaining the decision to conduct nuclear tests. "We have an overt nuclear-weapon state on our borders, a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962," the letter said.

Four decades later, India and China have still not managed to settle disputes over border demarcations.

Peking yesterday dismissed India's picture of China as a nu-



A worker cleaning the floor in front of a picture of a mushroom cloud at the Military Museum in Peking. Yesterday, the Chinese said the Indian tests would have 'serious consequences for peace and stability' Photograph: Nathalie Behring/Reuters

clear threat as "gratuitous". "India wants to achieve a dominant position in South Asia," said Sun Shihai, deputy director of the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Also in Peking yesterday North Korea's ambassador to China, Chu Chang-jun, conducted a rare news briefing at which he warned that "some of our officials" had suggested

Pyeongyang should revive its nuclear-power programme. He accused Washington of moving too slowly on supplying promised light-water reactors. Under a 1994 accord, Pyongyang agreed to halt its reactor programme in return for safer reactors financed by South Korea, the US, and Japan.

More recently, North Korea was accused of supplying technology for Pakistan's new

Ghauri missile, whose test flight a few weeks ago so alarmed the Indian government.

■ Britain is recalling its High Commissioner from New Delhi for consultations, Reuters reports. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, told parliament Britain would be consulting its European partners on further reactions but did not mention the possibility of imposing sanctions.

Kremlin takes fright as Lebed bids for power

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

ALEXANDER LEBED, the former paratrooper general once rated as Russia's most trusted politician, is about to face the most important battle to date in his campaign to take over the Kremlin.

This weekend he hopes to burst out of the wings on to the centre stage of Russian politics by winning the governorship of Krasnoyarsk, a mineral-rich region in western Siberia four times the size of Texas.

Voters will go to the polls on Sunday for the final round of the election, which, if Mr Lebed triumphs, will make him a front-runner in the race to replace Boris Yeltsin. The contest, which pitches him against the incumbent governor, Valery Zubov, a moderate pro-marketeer, is seen as a test-bed for the presidential election in 2000, and has drawn in worried rivals, power-hungry oligarchs and the Kremlin.

Victory for Mr Lebed, a nationalist, would restore much of the clout he lost when an ungrateful Mr Yeltsin signed a decree, live on national television, firing him as head of the Security Council. His dismissal came only four months after Mr Yeltsin gave him the job in a brazen attempt to win over his 10.7 million share of the vote between the two rounds of the 1996 presidential elections. His sacking - the product of infighting amid the President's aides - came despite his success in brokering an end to the Chechen war; it set a vengeful Mr Lebed on Mr Yeltsin's heels.

The fact that Mr Lebed, 48, who last month won the first round of the Krasnoyarsk election with 45 per cent, seems likely to win has raised alarm throughout Russia's political establishment. He has made no secret of his plan to use the job, which gives him a helpful seat

in the Federation Council, as a launching pad for a bid for the highest office.

The Communists fear he will take a large bite out of their stagnant electorate, burying their slender hopes of succeeding Mr Yeltsin. His rivals know one of his weaknesses, the lack of big-time money, could be solved. To the alarm of the Kremlin, and of much of the Moscow financial and social elite ranged behind him, he would be well-placed to recruit Siberia's raw-material barons to bankroll his presidential bid.

That anxiety was reflected by Moscow's mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, a frontrunner for the presidency, who has pitched in to help

with accounts of the daily duel for Siberia's hearts and minds. Pressing regional issues - unpaid wages, a crumbling infrastructure - have been largely overshadowed by the gladiatorial struggle.

The tactics of the American campaign trail abound. Mr Lebed, who long ago swapped khaki for cashmere and silk, is supported by spin doctors overseeing a super-slick PR operation. Their coups include a visit from the French film star Alain Delon, a big star in Russia.

Yesterday Mr Zubov, a former economics professor and Yeltsin loyalist who was a shooin until Mr Lebed entered the fray, counterattacked by wheeling in Russia's female pop diva, Alla Pugachyova. The governor, supported by the Kremlin, is putting up a spirited fight. "Fascists hide behind your back," snapped Mr Zubov in a television debate this week. "I have not used my fists in a long time," retorted Mr Lebed, an ex-boxer who has boasted of breaking the jaws of soldiers who brutalised their juniors.

And that last detail is the principal problem with Mr Lebed. A hero of the Afghan war and broker of a lasting cease-fire in Moldova, he styles himself as a democrat, albeit it one who places a sharp accent on law and order. He talks of encouraging private investment, fighting corruption, and stimulating the market economy.

But his critics, especially in the West, where he is viewed with concern, have not forgotten a tirade in which he called Mormons "mould and scum", and cited Russia's "rusty missiles" as a response to Nato expansion. Such remarks can be put down to stump rhetoric. His record, particularly, his performance in Chechnya, outshines his sillier outbursts. Yet it is impossible to be absolutely sure that a despot's heart does not beat beneath the soft folds of his charcoal suit.



Alexander Lebed: Democrat or despot?

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THE INDEPENDENT

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tickets to the Bhs Graduate Fashion Week Gala Show
Showcasing the future of fashion

The world's greatest showcase for young British design talent - Bhs Graduate Fashion Week is returning to London's South Bank this summer at Jubilee Gardens (8-12 June).

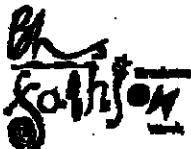
Do not miss this fantastic opportunity to win a pair of much sought after VIP tickets for the highlight of the week - the Gala Show on 12 June, including invites to the exclusive Gala Show Champagne Reception and a Bhs voucher worth £100.

The Show is now in its fourth year of Bhs sponsorship and is recognised as being the forum for aspiring Gallianos and Stella McCartneys to make their impact on the fashion world.

Nearly 1,000 students from 40 UK colleges will be participating in the event, promising sick catwalk shows, dramatic stands and diverse portfolios.

We have three pairs of tickets to win. To enter this competition dial the number below, answer the following question on line leaving your name and full address:

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Reading such a wordy advert is not easy, especially if the person writing it finds it very difficult to put into words exactly what they really sort of mean and they keep using far more words than are absolutely necessary to get the point across quickly and go on and on and on and on about things that are only really interesting to themselves.

And what if the writer starts rambling and ambling with woolly words and nothing he says sense to make seems or maybe he just goes

silent for a few paragraphs. Would you read on, or tell him he's so incredibly funny and take him to the pub where everyone can laugh at him.

Let's be honest, reading takes a little bit of concentration, a smidgen of intelligence and, heaven forbid, time. A telly ad on the other hand is easy to watch and tells you exactly what it means instantly. Why do people like charities write pages and pages of weenie little words about really nasty things when they could just get Tom Cruise saying "Show me the money" – naked. We'd get the point wouldn't we? And it would be a lot less work for us. It's only an advert after all. It's not life and death is it? – well not ours anyway. We don't want to do all that reading, all that hard work, just get to the point.

OK suicide, I want to talk about suicide, now are you going to carry on reading?

(A lot of people just stopped.) But you're prepared to read on and listen. Let's see, yeah I've thought about it, who hasn't? I once thought a great suicide note would be "Things to do today" – be more successful, become a parent, be nicer, get fit, get a conservatory, go on holiday, go mend the tap etc. etc. etc. etc., of course – I knew I couldn't, well wouldn't do any of them, any day – no way José.

So finally I've told you what I want to talk about, sort of. Taken me long enough hasn't it? Why didn't I just put it up front, then you wouldn't have had to listen to all this drivelling on.

But there lies the point and why people like yourselves make good listeners, because they are prepared to put in the effort to "listen".

See, listening properly is just like reading properly, pretending to do them or half doing them doesn't work. If you're thinking about something else you can't read properly, if you take the book down the pub and get pissed you can't read properly, or if you burst into tears and get upset you can't read properly.

Of course you can appear to be reading and listening but in reality it's you that's lost the plot (cracking jokes while someone's trying to confide in you doesn't work either).

No, the ability to listen, like reading has no short cut. It takes effort. It takes patience, and it takes perception, to read between the lines of what's being said. It also takes the brains to know that what's not being said is as important as what is being said, and most of all it takes time.

By now, you've proved you're a good listener. You may be interested to know 16% of men would have told me to snap out of it at paragraph five. 10% of men and women would have simply panicked at paragraph two and 7% of men would have told me to keep my problems to myself.

Statistically speaking, you're also more likely to be a woman (now I know why my wife is so much better at reading books than me) as women find it much easier to talk about their problems because they find it more likely other women will listen to them. Men on the other hand don't expect to be listened to and understood, but joked about, and taken down the pub to forget and fall over. We all know this doesn't help. Neither does being told about all the positive things in your life.

What does help is to really listen, to set aside time to listen, to allow friends to tell you the truth and not play down their problems.

The ability to listen to people in trouble can be the difference between life and death. The Samaritans know this from years and years of experience, but they also know you don't have to be a Samaritan to be a good listener. That's why this year Samaritans Week, which runs from 15th-23rd May, is dedicated to the importance of listening throughout society.

One person in Britain dies by suicide about every 90 minutes. 75% are men. Every 7 seconds someone contacts The Samaritans and every year they receive over 1.5 million silent calls. 55% of young women and 32% of young men have felt that life is not worth living at some stage.

These people are all someone's colleague, neighbour, brother, sister, mother, father or friend. Please take the time to listen to them, use your instinct, if you think someone you know needs help they probably do. Finding that someone actually cares enough to really listen to them really can make the difference between someone choosing life rather than suicide.

Thank you for taking the time to listen.

The Samaritans

The Bombay bombshell

Shobha De's raunchy novels have enraged and titillated India. By Kathy Marks

"HE DREW me close to him and stuck his tongue down my throat. His rough hands were tearing at my blouse, while his knee was still locked between my legs. 'Let's do it standing up,' he said, unzipping his stained jeans."

This is standard fare for readers of the lurid "sex and shopping" novels that dominate the lower end of the popular fiction market. It comes not from the pages of Jackie Collins, though, but from Shobha De, a Bombay-based writer who has shocked polite Indian society with a series of raunchy tales set in her native city.

These homegrown "bonkbusters", with their racy plots, strong language and explicit sex scenes, have proved an overnight publishing sensation, transforming De into India's biggest-selling English-language novelist. But reviewers and commentators are scandalised. Despite being the land of the *Kama Sutra* and erotic temple carvings, modern India - thanks largely to the influence of the British Raj - is distinctly prudish. Hence one critic's denunciation of De as the "princess of porn".

Now De, a former model and gossip columnist, has written her first non-fiction book, *Surviving Men: The Smart Woman's Guide To Staying On Top*. Shortly to be published in Britain, where she has a dedicated following in the Asian community, it is a witty and acerbic analysis of the shortcomings of Indian men and is, she says, of universal relevance. The book, 27 short chapters

with headings such as *Are Men Moral?*, portrays men as a pathetic bunch of creatures, inept in bed, lacking in personal hygiene and easily manipulated.

In London this week to conduct a three-day creative writing workshop, De relates with glee the furious reception that *Surviving Men* was given at home. "Indian men are very thin-skinned, and they're not used to being lampooned," she says. "They take all this as an affront to their masculinity."

"You see, urban Indian women have made great leaps forward, but men are still living in the 15th century."

De, just turned 50, was the first Indian woman novelist to

write about sex in a manner neither coy nor apologetic. Her debut work, *Socialite Evenings*, a tale of wealth, power and intrigue among the Bombay jet-set, sold 40,000 copies - a huge number, by Indian standards - and led one critic to observe that Penguin India, her publisher, "have decided to put themselves in the service of the country, masturbating the nation".

De, immaculate in a bright turquoise salwar-kameez, shrugs her slim shoulders. "Sex is still a taboo subject in India, although God knows our population figures speak for them-

selves." She denies that she set out to shock - "I didn't want to be a literary streaker" - but clearly enjoys doing so, albeit from her safe vantage point as a member of the moneyed elite.

Born in the state of Maharashtra, De moved to Bombay as a child and, after taking a psychology degree, overcame the opposition of her conservative Brahmin parents to take up a career in modelling. Later, after a stint as an advertising copywriter, she became the founder-editor of *Stardust*, a gossip magazine about the "Bollywood" film industry. The transition to celebrity author was almost accidental; she sat

down to write a non-fiction book about Bombay at the request of Penguin and ended up with *Socialite Evenings*.

De affects weariness with the Indian media's obsession with her glamorous image - neglecting to mention that she exploits that image as part of a highly successful marketing strategy. A portrait of her, posed by a fashion photographer, appears on the dustjacket of all her books, showing off her cool beauty to perfection. De also maintains a high profile through three weekly columns in Indian newspapers in which she doles out provoca-

tive views on love, life and politics.

Her self-promotion machine has also made much of the fact that she moves in the same charmed circles as the tycoons and movie moguls who people her fiction. Indeed, one of her early publicity blurbs boasted that "her private life reads like one of her novels".

In fact, she says, she leads "a disappointingly conventional life". Married to a millionaire shipping magnate who proposed to her within 10 minutes of meeting her, she has six children and writes her books in long-hand on the dining room table of their oceanside penthouse apartment.

The broad appeal of her novels, she believes, lies in their depiction of a modern, urban India that is unknown to most Indians. "They also have an aspirational quality," she says. "Indians are fascinated by Bombay, the city is a magnet. It is deliciously evil and has a tremendous energy, a cutting-edge quality that pushes you to the edge."

She believes that her books reflect the changing nature of male/female relationships in India, where an explosion in job opportunities over the past decade has spawned a new breed of woman: educated, assertive, increasingly prepared to demand her rights in all areas of life including the bedroom.

"My heroines are anything but victims and doormats," says De. "They don't get kicked around and, if they do, they kick right back. In the groin, if at all possible."

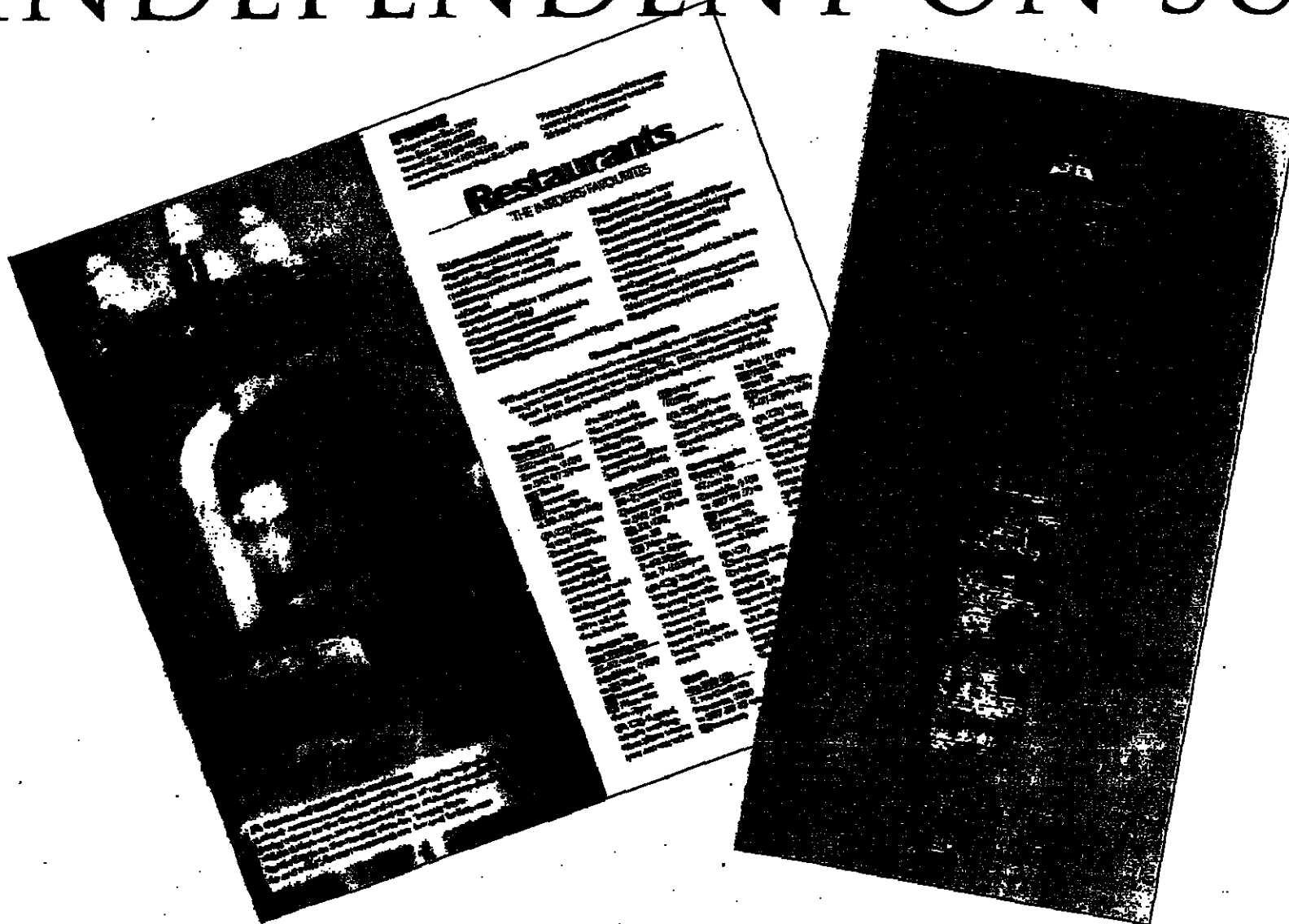


Model-turned-novelist Shobha De has been dubbed the "princess of porn" by critics

Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra

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INDEPENDENT
ON SUNDAY

Diary of a fast-food junkie

We spend three years of our lives eating, so could a diet of take-aways free up valuable time? Tim Hulse put the theory (and his stomach) to the test

Thursday 7 May
Fast food consumed: 1 Egg McMuffin, 1 Burger King cheeseburger meal, 1 KFC original recipe meal. Rennie's indigestion tablets consumed: 4.

8.30am: Article in this morning's paper reveals that, on average, we spend three and a half years of our lives eating. Food for thought or what? What else might I have done with all that time? Circumnavigated the globe? Written several novels? Maybe even finished painting the shelves in my hallway. The possibilities are endless.

Which is why I find myself in McDonald's chewing on an Egg McMuffin ("chewing" being very much a necessity - if you dropped one of these things, it would bounce). From now on, I'm not going to waste any more time on eating. It's going to be fast food all the way. (Cue imaginary trumpets heralding the dawning of a new, action-packed life.) Uncle Ronald here I come.

Fail to win free hamburger in the McDonald's World Cup Years scratchcard game. Apparently, it was McLaren-Ford who won the Formula 1 Motor Racing Constructors' Championship in 1974. So now I know. Never realised that eating fast food could be educational.

7.30pm: Realise that eating fast food can also be potentially harmful to health. While I'm sitting in the Kilburn branch of Kentucky Fried Chicken, picking over the batter-encrusted skeleton of a dead hen, an unseemly fracas occurs. It ends with a middle-aged customer, undoubtedly the worse for drink, being forcibly ejected onto the street by the manager. "I'm going to close this fuck-

ing place down!" are his final words of bravado as he's bundled out of the door. Eat the remainder of the meal quickly in expectation of brick through window. Thankfully it never comes.

Notice uncanny and somewhat unfortunate resemblance between Colonel Sanders and Rolf Harris, cheery host of *Animal Hospital*. Suspect chicken I've just eaten was probably beyond help.

Friday 8 May
Fast food consumed: 1 Big Mac meal, 1 portion of cod and chips at a chippy somewhere in London but I'm not absolutely sure where exactly (look, it was Friday night, okay?). Rennie's indigestion tablets consumed: 2.
1.30pm: Beginning to feel like a foreigner in my own country. Partly because English is clearly not the first language of the people who serve me my meals (ditto fellow diners), but mainly because I'm eating fast food on my own, which is something I tend to do abroad.

Fast food restaurants are an anonymous haven for the solitary diner. I know, because I've eaten lonely Big Macs all over the world, from Barcelona to Bangkok and from Houston to Hong Kong. And when you think about it, old Ronald McDonald doesn't seem to have any mates, does he? Which is as it should be, because Ronald is the patron saint of the lonely eater. God bless him.

Fail to win free portion of French fries by not knowing that Lionel Richie's Top 10 hit in 1982 was "Truly". Could have sworn it was "All Night Long".

Saturday 9 May
Fast food consumed: 1 quarter-

pounder with cheese meal at tourist trap on Oxford Street, 1 chicken shawarma with haloumi cheese, 1 plate of chicken liver and 1 spinachy samosa-type thing at Beirut Express, Edgware Road. Rennie's consumed: 4.
1.45pm: Make mental list of strange things I have eaten in my life:

locusts
crickets
alligator
kangaroo
ostrich
guinea pig
Pot Noodle

All of them were preferable to the glistening ball of grease served up to me at a place called American Burger, its only claim to fame being that it sells "The Best Value Burger in Town". And even that isn't true.

To be honest, all this fast food is beginning to get me down a bit. I daydream continually of lazy hours spent in some local trattoria with waiters brandishing giant pepper mills as I bore my dinner companion rigid with my favourite story of how I nearly died from an infected blister. (An epic saga full of drama and pathos - remind me to tell you about it sometime.) And I'm constantly beset by images of the kinds of food I've now renounced - piquant, summery things like sun-dried tomatoes and olives, and slow, time-consuming things like sausages that have gently been fried to a lovely, black crisp...

And my social life is suffering somewhat. Friends tend to react rather badly when they invite me for dinner and I have to say no, because I'm going to McDonald's. Amazing how narrow-minded some people can be.

Sunday 10 May
Fast food consumed: 1 Big Mac meal, 1 Big K meal. Rennie's consumed: 6.
7.30pm: On day that football Premiership reaches its climax, have decided to stage the Burger-ship equivalent: the Big Mac versus its new upstart challenger, Burger King's Big K. The ultimate head-to-head!

Having now sampled both, I can announce that the Big K scores highly on texture, making the Big Mac seem a little slimy in comparison. (Hersey! May Saint Ronald forgive me.) However, the Big K bun fell apart and, as usual with Burger King,



Tim Hulse chows down on the last burger of his junk-food trial. Maxi-pack of Rennie's not pictured

Photograph: Edward Webb

they went overboard with the vegetable matter.

It was a close call and had to be decided on a ketchup tiebreaker. In the end, the jury (me) voted the Big Mac the winner, simply because the accompanying ketchup came in a little pot, making chip-dipping simple. Burger King provides sachets, which means you have to squeeze the ketchup into a dollop on your tray. Most inconvenient. As Saint Ronald knows, God is in the details.

Monday 11 May
Fast food consumed: 1 Burger King Whopper with cheese meal, 1 Burger King cheeseburger meal. Rennie's consumed: 4.

7.30am: Have just spent 10 minutes on toilet. Bowels appear to be seizing up. Feared this might happen. The phrase "I really feel like a burger" has been taken on an awful literal

meaning, in that I feel like my insides are packed full of 100 per cent pure beef.

Have also become obsessed with memory of newspaper story which described the cleaning of a sewer somewhere in the West End. Apparently the amount of congealed fat removed was equivalent in volume to that of a double-decker bus. Suspect my arteries currently contain a similar amount.

6.45pm: Go for drink with a friend. Take advantage of evening sunshine and sit outside the pub. Friend draws attention to the large number of flies buzzing over my head, no doubt attracted by the meaty odours which ooze from my every pore. Worry that life is turning into a tacky horror film starring myself as The Burger Thing - Half Person, Half Pattie. (In the bathroom, no one can hear you scream...)

Tuesday 12 May
Fast food consumed: 1 veggie Whopper meal, 1 McDonald's vegetable Deluxe meal. Rennie's consumed: 2. Time spent on toilet: 15 minutes.

7.30am: An equation seems to have come into effect which dictates that the more time I save eating fast food, the longer I spend in the bathroom, bug-eyed and straining to eject it from my system. Clearly something has to be done.

1.30pm: Lunch with veggie friend, who introduces me to the questionable delights of the veggie Whopper. It has a strange, curry-like taste, but she reckons it will sort out my little "problem". This evening I'm going to try the McDonald's version.
9pm: Severe flatulence. Have become walking embodiment of VZ character Johnny Far-pants. But at least I now know that the planet Pluto was dis-

covered in the World Cup year of 1930.

Wednesday 13 May
Fast food consumed: 0. Rennie's consumed: 0.

I can't face it any longer. In the past six days, I've eaten nine burgers of one kind or another and 11 portions of chips. Just the smell, even the thought, of a fast food restaurant is now enough to make me feel sick. So it's back to good old slow food from today.

Cold food. Wet food. Food that isn't greasy. Food that doesn't have a catchy name and a silly slogan. Food that doesn't come on a tray and isn't accompanied by the latest chart hits. Food that isn't at a reduced price while special promotion lasts and at participating outlets only. Sorry, Ronald, I did my best, but I think we're going to have to call it a day. I'd rather spend my life eating.

A strange marriage even if the price is right

It could be a wedding tailor-made for the tabloids, but have James Major and Emma Noble got a lot to learn about love? By Virginia Ironside



Conservative couple...

NO ONE in their right minds gets engaged after only knowing each other for only three months. So is the engagement between John Major's son, James, and former topless model, Emma Noble, the act of obsessive sexual madness? It could be true love, of course, or it is, as seems more likely, a publicity stunt with about much substance to it as the recently bruited idea that Chris Evans is Anthea Turner's new love? It may sound cynical, but you can't get away from the fact that James is hoping to set up his own nightclub and, as we all know, many entrepreneurs will stop at nothing to get publicity for their ventures. Emma, on the other hand, was at the time of their meeting a hostess of Bruce Forsyth's *The Price is Right* TV game show, and makes no bones about her ambition to be a TV presenter. When she first met him she was reported as saying: "This looks like a great photo-opportunity."

And you only have to look at photographs of them together to suspect that things just don't look right. Most people

engaged to be married prefer dignified pictures of themselves looking as though they are embarking on a lifetime adventure. They don't get themselves snapped snogging on a sofa, she (who says she is 24 but is, in fact, nearly 27) in a bright pink dress, all strings, cleavage (enhanced last year), and little else except leopard-skin high heels, he in trendy white T-shirt and cool jeans. To me, they don't look like a couple in love; they look like a couple on the make.

Miss Noble has told how she and James are hurt by the stories that have cropped up about their relationship. She said: "We know the truth, our friends and our family know the truth." James has attacked the liars who have spread the gossip saying: "There's a lot of lies that have been printed but we all know the truth and just ignore it." And what of the parents? They are "delighted" of course. But what else could they say? I bet underneath it all Norma is chewing her nails and rather wishing her son could find someone more serious to

settle down with. Emma's father said it was "fantastic news". But I bet he wants his daughter's happiness at heart and must wonder if this is really the way to get it.

Recently, Anthea Turner - another C-list celebrity - went off with Grant Bovey, a businessman with three children. His wife, Della, didn't take it lying down. The whole affair generated huge publicity for all three protagonists, and now, after enormous coverage, including 14 pages in *OK!* after the couple's reconciliation, Ms Turner's profile is even higher, and Mrs Bovey is, wait for it... to host her own TV show. Was that just a publicity stunt? Who knows, but it certainly made the Boveys financially better-off. Similarly, her association with James has done Emma no harm at the bank. What are we to make of all this? Using affairs, marriage and divorce as mere publicity stunts is fine, as long as no one else gets hurt. But someone always does.

Often there are children, parents and grandparents to consider. As members of

an older or a younger generation they may believe in marriage and not imagine that anyone could use it cynically. And using marriage and engagement as some kind of public relations tool doesn't do society any good either. It demeans the very ceremonies that are its mainstay. Marriage is about love, relationships, children, and commitment. It shouldn't be used to further people's careers and get them more publicity and cash.

True, the pair may be genuinely in love, but if not there is something truly repulsive about using the build-up to a service and commitment that many people feel is blessed by God, for your own commercial ends. I give their engagement a couple of months. And if I'm wrong, I give their marriage no more than a year. One can only hope they don't have children or, if they do, they won't use them in more self-serving photo-opportunities - as the Boveys did in *OK!*. If the pair had any dignity, they would ban all pictures and interviews from now on. Fat chance.



... not so conservative couple

Photograph: Steve Finn/Alpha

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'Ethics' didn't help in Indonesia

IT IS HARD to believe that, as he returns to find his capital city in chaos, President Suharto of Indonesia will be able to change the mood of a people who seem determined not only to overthrow him, but to unleash violence on the sizeable Chinese population of the country. Order has broken down in Indonesia and it is difficult to see what Suharto or the West can now do to rescue matters. It is, though, much simpler to identify the failures in policy that led us to this pass.

Suharto has been a despotic, brutal and nepotistic leader for most of his time in power. When he took power in 1965 in similarly bloody circumstances (400,000 Chinese died in the riots then) he became leader of what could still easily be described as an "under-developed nation", a mere "domino" in America's cold war against Communism. Today the Indonesian economy, even after the crash last autumn, is one of the most important in the region and indeed the world. But Suharto outlived his usefulness years ago and we should have encouraged him to follow his stated ambition to become a sage, before his people forced matters for us. We are now faced with the worst of all worlds.

The Americans are said to be embarrassed about their failure of intelligence about the Indonesian test explosions. At least these were underground. The build-up in tension in Indonesia has been distressingly visible and yet far less was done for this nation than was done, for example, to rescue South Korea. This is not to say that we should have had the IMF bail out Suharto. It is to say that he should have been provided with incentives and penalties to liberalise his country in return for stabilising her economy.

Britain is not a big player in this part of the world, but we do have some influence through our substantial arms trade. Our policy has been short-sighted and made all the more incomprehensible by the Government's impractical posturing about its "ethical" foreign policy. We know now that more than 50 batches of British arms have been sold to Indonesia since Labour came to power. It is not clear whether these weapons have been used to suppress internal dissent, to deny human rights and to defy international law in East Timor. But that is a secondary issue. The primary query is why we, a nation which allegedly runs an ethical policy, were doing this kind of business with a dictator like Suharto without securing some real progress on the ethical agenda. The West backed Suharto far too wholeheartedly for far too long and failed to dislodge him quickly and effectively. If we had we might have ensured an orderly transition to a more democratic regime.

So we have to face up to our share of the blame for the brutality and ethnic cleansing that is threatening Indonesia. Let us hope that our next steps in foreign policy are uncomplicated by the pretensions of the ethical doctrine.

Too little, too late to stop virtual monopoly

YOU COULD be reading these words on the Internet, at the website address above, in which case the chances are you got here by using a piece of software called Internet Explorer. Or you may be one of the majority of the population of Britain who have never used a computer, in which case you might be forgiven for thinking that the threatened court case concerning Explorer in the United States is irrelevant. It is not. The Internet, the world-wide web of computers linked by telephone lines, increasingly forms the basis of the "weightless" economy which will determine our prosperity in the future. Already, one corporation has built a position of unhealthy dominance over this virtual infrastructure.

Microsoft, headed by Bill Gates, has pursued that trajectory so familiar to capitalism: creative innovation, dazzling success, wealth beyond dreams and, finally, attempted monopoly. As technological change accelerates, Mr Gates has followed this path unusually quickly. How we cheered when he outwitted and outsold IBM, the previous dominant player, which had grown fat and monopolistic itself. How we admired the entrepreneurial skill with which he built up his company and brought high-powered computing within reach of millions. But how we began to grow doubtful when Mr Gates started to abuse his dominant position in operating systems (the basic software which runs computers) to lever himself into a dominant position in related markets.

First came the irritating quirks which we suspected, but could not prove, were deliberately introduced to make Microsoft programs incompatible with competitors' software. Then the Internet started to expand and Mr Gates, wrongfooted by this change, used his market muscle to catch up. Nine-tenths of the world's personal computers are already sold with his Windows software, so he decided to give away Internet Explorer free as part of the package. Explorer is a "browser" program, the gizmo you need to get on the Internet and find your way around. It is not as good as Netscape Navigator, but it works and it is free – so who is complaining? Well, consumers save money in the short term, just as they do when Rupert Murdoch sells his newspapers at below cost price. But if competitors are driven out of business, then we all lose out in the end – as we have seen countless times before, once a monopoly is established, prices rise to exploit it.

Now it looks as if the threat of legal action has forced Microsoft to offer concessions, but although American standards are much tougher on such anti-competitive practices than ours, we suspect they will still be too little, too late. The Competition Bill going through Parliament here is long overdue, but already out of date. On both sides of the Atlantic we need much faster responses to the likes of Gates and Murdoch. We need a "trust-buster" able to stop dodges like the free Explorer bundle as soon as they are spotted and then force dominant companies to prove they are acting in the public interest.

Meanwhile, if you are on the Net, why not go to www.netscape.com and download a copy of Navigator, which is now also free, and use that instead? Strike a small blow for consumer choice.



Labour's union link

Sir: Anne McElvoy is right to argue that New Labour has little time for the unions (Comment, 12 May). However, the concept that the Labour Party would be more democratic without them is false. The union link needs to be democratised and modernised, but only anti-democratic forces have any interest in breaking the link.

The Party's internal democracy is already weakened by an increasingly arrogant and powerful centralised elite, and the removal of the unions would only enhance the power of Millbank. If there is not to be a complete takeover by professional politicians, with all the abuse of power implicit in that, then alternative sources of pressure and funding need to be available. This is the more so because the decline in union funding (which is in itself welcome) has been replaced by plutocratic funding. It is no accident that Bernie Ecclestone's cheque was replaced by one from the owner of Planet Hollywood.

TREVOR FISHER
Stafford

Sir: Anne McElvoy should focus on the real issues: the only time the union link is broken is in the columns of fashionable journalists. It does not register with the vast majority of ordinary Labour Party members.

Nor does it reflect the fact that without unions such as the AEEU (Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union), there would be no New Labour. When Labour was heading off towards political oblivion, unions worked to bring the party back to reality. Throughout the 1980s, the AEEU pushed for OMOV (one member, one vote), the expulsion of Militant and an end to unilateralism. Unions have much to gain from leaving Labour now as we did when Labour was facing extinction. We are one family and we're sticking together.

KEN JACKSON
General Secretary, Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union
Bromley, Kent

Sir: I think the Government's re-

ported idea, that trade union membership should not be recognised unless at least 40 per cent of the entire workforce votes for it, is an excellent one.

Indeed, it is so compellingly excellent that I am even now eagerly waiting for the Government to announce that the same percentage is being applied to all referendums, general elections, by-elections, local elections, elections of MEPs, elections to the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, Northern Ireland Council, and anything else that may have slipped my mind at the moment, so that unless a referendum proposal or candidate receives the approval of at least 40 per cent of all registered voters, the vote is invalid.

In addition, no vote in the House of Commons or the House of Lords should count unless passed by at least 40 per cent of the entire membership of that House. I then expect the Government to declare that no business in either House can be conducted unless a quorum of 40 per cent of the membership is present and each member shown to be at least 40 per cent awake.

Logical conclusion demands no less.

RALPH ESTLING
Ilminster, Somerset

Ulster conundrum

Sir: If the Protestants (Unionists) in Northern Ireland vote for the so-called Good Friday Agreement they will be voting with Sinn Féin, the IRA, and the SDLP.

If the Catholics (nationalists and republicans) vote for the agreement they will be voting for the Ulster Unionist Party and for the sectarian extremists of the Ulster Defence Association and the Ulster Volunteer Force.

If the Catholics vote against the agreement they will be voting with

Paisley, the Orange Order, and the sectarian extremists of the Loyalist Volunteer Force.

If the Protestants vote against the agreement they will be voting with the republican extremists of the Continuity IRA.

What sort of choices are those to put before decent, peaceful people?

What kind of an "agreement" have Tony Blair, Mo Mowlam, and Senator George Mitchell concocted?

ANDREW BOYD
Newtownabbey, Co Antrim

Genetic patents

Sir: Recent moves by the European Parliament to adopt the fundamentally flawed Legal Protection of Biotechnological Inventions Directive (report, 13 May) are worrying, to say the least.

This Directive blurs the line further between what constitutes an invention and a discovery, at a time when ethical considerations should be at the forefront of decision-making. Sadly, it seems such considerations come a distant second to the profiteering of industry.

People have the right to be asked before samples are taken from their bodies and patented. Under this Directive, that right will not exist.

Genetic modification of animals is one of the fastest growing areas of animal experimentation in the UK. In 1996, over 300,000 procedures involving genetically manipulated animals were carried out – an increase of 525 per cent since 1990.

This Directive will give the go-ahead for yet more experiments to be carried out at an ever-increasing rate. How does this tie with Labour's pledge to reduce animal experiments? Yet again, we see strong talk but little action.

Now is the time to have a wide-ranging debate on genetic engineering before we make decisions we later regret. At the moment, a hid-

den revolution is taking place that nobody voted for.

NORMAN BAKER MP
(Lewes, Lib Dem)
House of Commons
London SW1

The writer is Liberal Democrat Genetic Engineering Spokesperson.

Sir: James Mustoe, in his letter about "super-genes" (13 May) says that the female elite are the "prettiest girls", whereas the male elite are the "cleverest boys". How long will it take for the message to get through? My wife, who is a clever woman, and I are losing hope...

TIM BARRACLOUGH
London SE13

Real nappies

Sir: Anni Harris (letter, 9 May) asks just how "clean" reusable nappies are.

The "vile chemical" we use to sanitise our reusables is that scourge of the environment, vinegar (as recommended by the manufacturers). The "amazing temperature" we wash them at is 60 degrees and on average we do five half-loads every two weeks. If the weather is fine we hang them outside, otherwise they dry in the airing cupboard (we don't have a tumble drier). Hardly an environmental disaster.

DAVID SHIRTLEIFF
Loughborough, Leicestershire

Sir: Before our son was born, nearly seven years ago, I undertook a cost-benefit analysis of traditional versus disposable nappies. I costed two dozen good-quality towelling nappies, with two buckets, sanitising powder and washing costs for two years. This total equated to the cost of disposable nappies for 16 weeks. I would urge all mothers to consider using traditional nappies for both environmental and economic reasons.

HELEN WOOLLEY
Sheffield

Testing times

Sir: India has conducted underground weapon tests, and the United States complains that "this runs counter to the effort the international community is making to promulgate a comprehensive ban on such testing".

The United States' objections would be more soundly based if it had not over the years supported Israel's nuclear weapons and itself recently been developing new types of nuclear weapons that happen not to need testing.

Since the 1960s, when the Non-Proliferation Treaty was being negotiated, India has been quite consistent: either there is a general and comprehensive disarmament system – in which the United States and the other nuclear powers participate – or there is not. There is not.

ELIZABETH YOUNG
London W2

Double tunnel vision

Sir: I read with interest Stephen Plowden's article (13 May) and his views on a high-speed rail link from St Pancras to the Channel Tunnel.

However I must point out that his opening gambit that the road tunnel under the Channel is the "latest wheeze from Eurotunnel" is wholly inaccurate.

Under the 1986 Concession Agreement, Eurotunnel is obliged to present plans to the British and French governments for a road tunnel under the Channel. We shall obviously fulfil that obligation.

SARAH KENDALL
Director of Communications
Eurotunnel
Folkestone, Kent

Sir: Stephen Plowden takes a typically London-centred view.

The tunnel links not London to Paris but Great Britain to Europe, and should not be considered finished until there are fast links from all parts of Britain. I look forward to the day when Paris is not three hours from London but five from Newcastle.

JAMES MURPHY
Consett, Co Durham

An article about a programme about a book about Hemingway, papa of post-modernism



MILES KINGTON

I HAD TO go up to London the other day and who should I bump into but my old friend Adrian Wardour-Street? Adrian, as you may know, is the doyen of British PR.

"What are you up to," I cried.

"I?" said Adrian, steering me expertly into a passing coffee house. "I am in the business of buying you a coffee. Espresso? Cappuccino? Latte?"

"Latte isn't coffee," I said. "It's the Italian word for milk."

"They are so behind the times in your part of the world," said Adrian. "You'll be telling me next that post-modernism hasn't reached you in the provinces yet."

"I'm not sure if it has or not," I said.

"What exactly is it when it's at home?"

"Well, it's the stage that culture reaches when it does more borrowing than creating. At least, I think it is. Pop records created from other records... novels that revisit other novels... films which interpret one period in

terms of another... lives of people which might be biographies and might be novels..."

"Was the film *Time Bandits* post-modernist then?"

"I expect so," said Adrian, vaguely.

"This new project of Michael Palin's is sort of post-modernist."

"Palin?" I said. "Lord, what's he up to now? Walking round the world diagonally?"

"No, no – apparently he's retracing Ernest Hemingway's steps through Spain, Cuba, Africa, everywhere. The point is that Michael Palin wrote a novel called *Hemingway's Chair*, which was about a bloke who is obsessed with Hemingway. Now Palin is making a film in which he himself is obsessed with Hemingway. So the programme will

pose lots of post-modernist questions. Like: is it about Palin or about Hemingway? Or is it even about the character in Palin's book? Would Palin make a programme about an author who hadn't gone to such

nice places? Is it about the real Hemingway or the mythical Hemingway? See?"

"No."

"Well, here's another example. The programme series I'm working on at the moment, which I'm presenting..."

"Which YOU'RE presenting?"

"...is actually based on lots of other programmes in a very post-modernist way," said Adrian, ignoring me as usual. "I don't know if you ever saw *Coast to Coast* with Janet Street-Porter?"

"Some of it," I said. "Wasn't it all about Janet Street-Porter bumping into some of her London friends who had been specially driven out into the country for the purpose?"

"Exactly," said Adrian. "Now, this series I'm making is all about MY encounters with people making other programmes. As I journey across Britain I bump into Janet Street-Porter... I encounter the *Antiques Road Show* and get

something valued... I come round a corner and there is Lucinda Lambton inspecting the last Georgian public loo in Rutland... Another corner, and there are Darius Howe and Peregrine Worsthouse, being terribly interracial on their travels."

"So your programme is a programme which is entirely made up of extracts from other programmes?"

"Yes. But it's cleverer than that."

"How?"

"Because these bits have never appeared in the other programmes. My encounter with Janet Street-Porter appears in MY programme but not in hers. I get a Victorian pot valued by the *Antiques Road Show* people – but not for the *Antiques Road Show*. Only for my programme. So although in a way my programme is all off-cuts from other programmes, and couldn't exist without their existence, yet also what you see is peculiar to my programme."

My head swam.

"And what are you going to call the programme, or the series, rather?"

"*The Ultimate Post-Modernist Show*."

"Will people know what that means?"

"No. So instead we're going to call it *Hello, Mr Palin*."

"But is Michael Palin in it?"

"Not necessarily. But was Hemingway in *Hemingway's Chair*? Was the Pope in *The Pope's Rhinoceros*? Was Stalin in *Stalin's Nose*? Was..."

"When is the series going out?" I said, trying to stem the flood.

"That's the clever thing," said Adrian. "That's the really post-modernist thing about it. It's never going out. We're not doing it for transmission. Must dash. See you – clao!"

I later found out he had made up the whole idea and it was just a leg-pull. Trouble is, I keep thinking it's actually quite a good idea...

Why I applaud the books of men who tell it like it is



SUZANNE MOORE

"MEN have become the new women". Wonderful. I read that in these very pages. Men are oppressed by "the coming orthodoxy: female good, male bad". If men have become the new women I better get some more of them. There is the irony to be done, the kids to be put to bed and I'll have an extra one to run a hot bath for me when I stumble in from the pub having sexually harassed the barman.

David Aaronovitch is upset that female journalists such as myself have said nasty things about men. He was referring to the remarks I made about Paul Johnson. Did I suggest that "all men are wankers"? No, I will leave it for men to say that about themselves and what a good case they are making for such a gross generalisation.

Recently I have read a number of books by men about men and I have enjoyed them immensely. Hanif Kureishi's *Intimacy* is a novel about a man leaving his children and partner for his younger mistress. Howard Jacobson's *No More Mister Nice Guy* is about a man in a mid-life crisis ranting his way around Middle England and John Updike's *Toward the End of Time* has a man confronting the waning of his sexual power. All these books have been accused of misogyny, but I admire their brutal sexual honesty.

Kureishi's *Intimacy* has been controversial because it has been read as entirely autobiographical and therefore as a mean-spirited attack on the mother of his children. Yet apart from the fact that you cannot legislate the subjects that writers choose, Jay, the narrator of *Intimacy*, comes over as a pompous, selfish and deluded man. While critics have noted his bitchiness towards the woman he leaves - her crimes being that she is highly organised, reads cookbooks in bed, is getting older, thinks herself a feminist but is merely "bad-tempered", cries during a therapy session with a "fat, red, weeping face" - Kureishi is doing no more than document how it feels to fall out of love with someone.

His real subject, why men leave children, is surely immensely important and relevant. There is no point saying that "all men are bastards" if we do not know how it feels to kiss your children goodnight knowing that you will never live with them again. Is Kureishi a misogynist simply because he is describing how an individual man feels about an individual woman? I think not.

When Howard Jacobson and John Updike reduce their female characters to little more than a threatening, but desirable, range of body parts, and yet spend their lives in pursuit of these parts, is that misogyny? Or is it an insight into how some men feel? At the end of Updike's novel, Ben Turnbull has become impotent and is wearing nappies but is still dreaming of the glory days when he could have three women in his lunch-hour. Frank Ritz, who fancies himself as Rabelaisian is driven to underage prostitutes to satisfy himself but eventually

returns home to the woman he has left.

Of course there may be sensitive flowers who do not want to believe that men behave this way and that, instead, they stay at home working through their relationships; but let us deal with the real world. What certain men seem so upset about is that a woman might assume that they are like other men.

Such men always reassure us with the information that they really do like women, so may I reassure you all that I really find all male company totally thrilling but that will not stop my sense of injustice at the way the world is run. If it is "hatespeak" to generalise about an entire gender I plead guilty, yet I find myself living in a world of "hatespeak" towards women. It is called common sense, or having a laugh, or in better circles, irony.

While I would agree with Aaronovitch that the future is female and we must worry about the sullen, disaffected male youth who are so lacking in self-esteem that they can only regress, I wonder what is to be done. For it seems as if there are two types of men in the world: middle-class ones with a nice line in self-deprecating humour and this other sad kind. Are these two types not related at all?

It is not women who are disowning the maladaptive dinosaurs in our midst; it is also other men who discuss them as if they were creatures from another planet. Is this merely a question of class and education? - because if it is then we could easily teach our boys to be nicer. Lottery money could be poured into institutions that promised to churn out men who don't mind doing child care.

Obviously it's not so easy to produce a more up-to-date and decent model of masculinity, so we have to look at what constitutes masculinity for men themselves. This is why I applaud the works of men who tell it like it is. Such work stands alongside other equally mud-

Why men leave children is immensely important and relevant

bled but sweeter, more gentle versions of manhood of the Nick Hornby variety.

There is no new orthodoxy that women are good and men are bad. That is the old orthodoxy. That is why women are supposed to have a civilising effect on men. That is why women are left bringing up the babies, because they are so "good" they won't just walk out. That is why having it all means doing it all, because women find it difficult to be as "bad" as the men. That is why women do not make it to the top, because they just don't have the killer instinct.

No, I would prefer some honesty. We are all a mixture of good and bad; it's just that men's badness is socially sanctioned. Nice guys might be offended by this, but I'm sure they can always find some worn-out women to console them.

Howard Jacobson has Frank Ritz say at the end of his novel: "For two pints, if there were somewhere worth going, if there were some other war worth fighting, if this field of blood were not the most transfixedly interesting place on earth, he'd be gone." All is fair in love and war. In order to fight the good fight we may have to acknowledge that nice guys aren't as nice as they think they are and nice girls never got anywhere.

While Robin Cook fails to live up to his advance billing, look out for John Prescott



DONALD MACINTYRE

THE Sandline affair is very far from being a first order crisis. Nor will it become one even if Peter Penfold, the British High Commissioner, turns out to have discussed military coups with President Kabbah and someone from a mercenary group in some fly-blown hotel bar in Conakry. But it shows a stubborn reluctance to lie down.

Yesterday was not the Foreign Office's finest hour. Appearing before a Commons Select committee, Sir John Kerr, the Permanent Secretary, exonerated Robin Cook of knowing about the Customs and Excise investigation into Sandline before he said he did. He made a convincing, if magisterial, case for allowing competent officials to deal with breaches of UN sanctions without constantly referring them upwards to ministers before they have been investigated.

And he then left a shadow of doubt over the future of the Minister of State, Tony Lloyd, by saying, firstly, that he thought a reference to the "rather routine" Customs and Excise investigation had been included in the official briefing pack given to him before an adjournment debate on 12 March. And secondly, that Lloyd, and not Cook, had been the minister initially told in April of Sandline's counter-allegations that FCO officials had been in cahoots with the company's plans to restore President Kabbah by military force.

All this seemed perfectly coherent. Until 4pm yesterday afternoon, when Sir John then announced that Mr Lloyd had, after all, not been told on 12 March that there was a Customs and Excise investigation. Which begs a question officials were last night unable to answer: why on earth not?

Nevertheless, the question of who knew what, when - which so obsessed Sir John's inquisitors - is in danger of overshadowing some larger ones that seemed not to interest them at all. Had it, in retrospect,



been so smart to draft a UN resolution which made it as unlawful to help the "good guys" (to use Tony Blair's phrase) in Sierra Leone as to help the bad guys? What is the balance to strike between the need to limit the appalling flow of paper to ministers in any big government department and the need to alert them to perils ahead.

And while officials now turn out to be having been a good deal more reticent than they should have been, did Robin Cook really have to make a drama out of a crisis by reacting at the outset of the affair as if not he, but possibly his department, could be embroiled in the sort of rerun of the Scott affair that this certainly wasn't?

Cook is probably the cleverest man in the Cabinet. His handling of complex EU negotiations has been pretty well faultless. His conduct of business in official meetings is decisive, brisk, and efficient. Sir John's account yesterday of how Cook, hungry for insights, cross-questioned him on a range of world issues late into the night when they first met in Washington is wholly convincing. I have it on the disinterested authority of the German ambassador to the EU that his chairmanship of the General Affairs council during the EU Presidency is exemplary.

No less a predecessor than Lord Hurd refuses to condemn the trouble he got into in India and the Middle East, on the grounds that there but for the grace of God he might have

gone himself. And, finally, Sir John's belated "clarification" last night demonstrates that on at least one occasion during the Sandline affair, officials were unnecessarily economical with the truth in their dealings with ministers.

There is nevertheless a mounting sense, compounded by the harassment Cook faces over the business Britain does with the brutal regime in Indonesia, that not all is well in the department he is responsible for running.

First there is his initial judgement in announcing, in a blaze of publicity, an ethical for-

The Foreign Office is now the bed of nails the Home Office traditionally was

eign policy. This is not to say cynically that he shouldn't have pursued one; rather that should have not announced it in advance, allowing every subsequent sale of arms, every contact with a dubious regime to be judged against it.

Secondly relations between officials and ministers have been - at least temporarily - brought to a new low by an affair that should never have been allowed to run out of control as it has. Suddenly the Foreign Office has become the bed of nails the Home Office traditionally was and now - so far - isn't.

The stranger contrast, however, is perhaps with John

Prescott, who happens to be the other most prominent left-winger in the Cabinet. If you had asked many politicians a year ago who would be in trouble at this stage of the Parliament Prescott would have figured prominently in the answers. Unstable, liable to blow up, incapable of driving policy, George Brown without the drink problem, even, perhaps, in Atlee's chilling words about a colleague "not up to it".

It doesn't look like that now. Indeed the closest parallel to Prescott's role in the Government appears to be that of William Whitelaw under

compromise; a good deal of it is owed to the DTI minister Ian McCartney and the highly developed negotiating skills of John Monks, the general secretary of the TUC. But Prescott effectively becomes its guarantor. He has remained remarkably true to the principle he formulated during the 1994 leadership contest: that he would disagree, if necessary, with his leader in private, but defend him in public.

This doesn't mean that everything in his department is perfect; far from it. The privatisation of the London Underground, for example, is a high-risk and possibly high-cost blend of old and New Labour. But Prescott shows every sign of being able to subordinate, perhaps more skillfully than some of his colleagues, his own ego to the interests of the Government collective.

And he should get his reward next month with a Transport White Paper that contains, despite opposition in some other parts of government, his cherished policy of road pricing in urban areas, including London. Cook will certainly not be moved in the next reshuffle; he remains one of the Cabinet's big beasts. Moreover he has time, as Lord Hurd pointed out yesterday, to rebuild the morale and coherence of his department. But there must be times when he looks across Whitehall to the office of the Deputy Prime Minister and envies the smooth trajectory of John Prescott since May 1.

Don't just offer advice, Mr Cruickshank, do something useful

William Hartston offers a practical way to squash the millennium bug

THERE are two theories about the millennium bug: Theory One - the Domesday Scenario - says that when computers click over to the year 2000 the whole of the western economy will collapse, planes will crash and lights will go out all over Europe, but none of that will matter because we'll all be killed by the stray nuclear missiles launched automatically

from ex-Soviet millennium-non-compliant computers.

Theory Two, however, says that all these scare stories are just part of the Millennium Scam - a get-rich-quick conspiracy of lawyers and computer consultants charging exorbitant fees to tell companies there's nothing to worry about. (So far, the lawyers are doing best: more money has been invested in assessing the legal implications of millennial meltdown than in tackling the problem itself.)

Action 2000, the bug-busting arm of the Department of Trade and Industry, run by Don Cruickshank, appears to take an optimistic version of the Domesday view: a huge disaster threat, but it's not too late to do something about it. But are

they doing the right things? Efforts have been concentrated in two principal directions: alerting the nation's businesses to test their systems in good time; and the training of an army of 20,000 technicians to return to their offices and squash bugs.

For large businesses, with purpose-built computer systems, such an individual approach is essential, yet in a country of four million small businesses the present mood of controlled panic is creating unnecessary work and confusion.

It's the single-PC companies who are being let down by our computer-welfare state. Every company that keeps its accounts on a standard off-the-peg spreadsheet, running on a popular computer make, has to find out for itself whether the

two are millennium-compatible. And if they are not, whether this will create significant problems.

By now, sufficient tests have surely been done to collate enough information on a floppy disk to give most small businesses a simple method of diagnosing the areas in which they might face problems. Most of the hard work has already been done, yet every firm is having to repeat it. The avoidance of such repetitive work is exactly what computer technology does best.

If Action 2000 were to send every VAT-registered business such a diagnostic floppy disk, it could save the nation billions. Estimates of the effect of the millennium bug on the British economy range from an eco-

nomie amped-down-sized loss of 29 per cent of GDP, to a best-case scenario of 1 per cent of businesses going bust. That's 40,000 firms and around half a million added to the unemployment figures.

Yet the remit of Action 2000 from the DTI prevents it from doing anything so useful. It is there to train and inform, to aid the every-man-for-himself culture, rather than producing something of general use. Yet every business needs all the help it can get - not only to test its own systems, but to be reassured that suppliers and clients are not going to let it down.

Of the £97m package announced last month to tackle the millennium bug, a large proportion will be eaten up in the

cost of performing repetitive diagnostic tasks. One research project and four million floppy disks would save a lot of money.

And even those costs could be cut drastically were the British and US governments to pass legislation making it mandatory for Microsoft and other leading software companies to come clean on which of their programs are going to foul up on 1 January 2000.

The way things are going, both our initial theories may be proved right: the computer consultants will become millennium millionaires, then they will be killed off with the rest of us by the failure of some vital system that went unchecked while they were coining their fortunes.

Major blessing

THE TABLOIDS were trying to track down John Major in America yesterday for a quote about his son's engagement. Pandora is happy to help. Talking to a friend recently about Emma Noble, his highly photogenic future daughter-in-law, the ex-Prime Minister said: "She's even nicer in the flesh."

Street smart

DERRY to the rescue: On Tuesday, the

final day of the Lord Chancellor's visit to Washington, he arrived at Georgetown University Law Center to discover that he was expected to give a speech. Lord Irvine of Lairg promptly improvised for 15 minutes, including the revelation that he and Mao Tse-tung were the only two honorary life members of the London School of Economics student union.

Afterwards, Derry met with a group of poor youths from the Bell Multicultural School who belong to a "street law" club. The club was in danger of losing its funding from Washington's municipal school board, but a representative of the board was present. After watching the Lord Chancellor spend an hour "trapping" with the tough kids, the official went back to the office and demanded that funding continue.

PANDORA

Horse opera

THE start of the Royal Windsor Horse Show today must give Mohamed Ali a cold shudder. After 13 years of Harrods sponsorship, in January the show's organisers ruthlessly dropped the Knightsbridge store as sponsor in favour of the Bond Street jewellers Asprey, who had made a higher bid. "This was entirely a commercial decision," said Simon Brooks-Ward, chairman of Windsor Equestrian Promotions. Perhaps, but there's no secret about the Royal revision towards Mr Fayed since the death of Princess Diana and his remarks about an "Establishment conspiracy".

It's well known that Mr Fayed treasured his annual photo-opportunity with the Queen at Windsor. Last year he hosted a lavish Saturday lunch in the Harrods tent where his late son Dodi was in sparkling form at one table, telling amusing but fond anecdotes about his father. How different things are this May for the grieving Egyptian.

On the other hand, Asprey's owner, Prince Jefri Bolkiah, the Sultan of Brunei's brother and no stranger to controversy himself, cannot be bothered to fill Mr Fayed's old seat in the Windsor Royal Box tomorrow. Or to have his photo taken with the Queen. He's not expected back in Britain until June when his polo team takes on Prince Charles's in a match at Cirencester. But that's a private affair, not a commercial decision.

Nerd flick

MICROSOFT'S Bill Gates faces more than just a potentially disastrous federal anti-trust action. Hollywood is now on his case. Michael Tolkia, author of the novel upon which Robert Altman's scathing satire about the film industry, *The Player*, was based, has teamed up with Sydney Pollack and Paramount to produce a film that sends up the \$20bn man.

According to the Web's Drudge Report, Tolkia has said, "We wanted to make a movie about the most fascinating person in our culture right now, and we wanted to ask the question 'Why does anybody need \$20bn?' The answer is obvious to Pandora. With \$20bn, if the prospect of being lampooned makes you cross, you can always buy the movie studio."

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23/BUSINESS

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Chancellor seeks to tackle Britain's productivity gap

By Michael Harrison

THE CHANCELLOR of the Exchequer yesterday hinted that his next Budget could include fresh incentives to encourage more investment by industry after a damning report showing that British productivity lags that of the US by 40 per cent.

Launching an initiative to tackle the productivity gap at a Downing Street seminar, Gordon Brown indicated that incentives for capital investment, skills development programmes and increased support for entrepreneurs were all on the agenda.

Treasury and Department of Trade and Industry officials later said that a range of measures to build on the corporate tax reforms set out in the last Budget were under examination.

The initiative follows a report to the Government from the US management consultants McKinsey showing that as well as lagging far behind American productivity standards, Britain was also at least 20 per cent behind Germany.

The report identifies Britain's inferior level of capital investment as one of the causes of its poor record on labour pro-

ductivity against competitor nations, including even the French, where industry is saddled with high social costs of employment.

Mr Brown and his officials strongly contested suggestions that introducing a national minimum wage would hamper the drive to improve competitiveness, pointing out that the US had had a minimum wage for many years.

But one of the authors of the report, Bill Lewis of the McKinsey Global Institute, pointed out that the US minimum wage was set at about half the level of those

in Germany and France and affected few employers because wages had risen so strongly.

The McKinsey analysis shows that in some sectors, such as the car industry, the UK's labour productivity is half that of the Japanese and 20 per cent below the US. In the service sector, the productivity of the UK's hotel industry is half that of the US while in telecoms the gap is 45 per cent.

The seminar was attended by 20 leading UK businessmen, including Lord Simpson, managing director of GEC,

John Browne, chief executive of BP, Sir Ian Prosser, chairman of Bass, and Terry Leahy, chief executive of Tesco. Mr Brown told them that to achieve the higher productivity on which growth, employment and living standards depended would require "a new national economic purpose".

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, who co-hosted the seminar, said that the McKinsey study echoed the findings of her own competitiveness unit and pledged that the Government would have a role to play in encouraging

investment and training and improving competition policy.

A series of 10 further seminars will take place around the country this year, covering sectors such as manufacturing, food retailing and software, while the Government intends to publish a competitiveness White Paper in the autumn.

According to McKinsey, the labour productivity gap with France and Germany is partly explained by the fact that these two countries have fewer people in employment working fewer hours.

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Gates prepares to back off First blood to the US trust-buster

Klein and Microsoft in 11th hour peace talks

By David Osborne
in New York

MICROSOFT, the American computer giant headed by the multi-billionaire Bill Gates, scrambled yesterday to fend off a potentially crippling antitrust action against it by the United States government, by engaging in dramatic 11th-hour negotiations in Washington for a possible out-of-court settlement.

News of the talks surfaced just one hour before a scheduled press conference at which the Justice Department's fair competition tsar, Joel Klein, had been set to outline his action against Microsoft. The attorneys general of three US states who, with about 16 other states, have also been threatening to file suits against the company, had been expected to join Mr Klein.

Microsoft, meanwhile, said it was delaying until Monday the first shipments of its new Windows 98 operating platform to personal computer manufacturers. It had planned to release the software today.

Sources said Microsoft had come forward with "major concessions". If they prove insufficient, however, Mr Klein and the attorneys general may yet forge ahead with the lawsuits that could be as far-reaching as the forcible break-up of the old AT&T in 1984 and Standard Oil in 1911.

The remarkable all-out assault on Microsoft, arguably the most revered but also the most feared of American enterprises, stems from a deepening conviction in US government that the company has abused its



Joel Klein and Bill Gates, whose corporation could yet be crippled by the determination of the head of the antitrust division of the Justice Department



near-monopoly position in the personal computer market illegally to trample its rivals and to deny consumers any realistic choices on how their machines function.

The suits were said to include a call on the courts to block the shipment of Windows 98 unless Microsoft agreed to a series of restrictions on the software's contents and the agreements Microsoft had been expecting to reach with the manufacturers who will install it in new computers.

The precise scope of the action that now threatens Microsoft is not fully known. The extraordinary spectacle of Microsoft scrambling to settle suggested the conditions being presented to the company were far from minor. Lawyers for Mr

Gates were expected to continue the talks in Washington this morning.

At the extreme, the suits could demand the actual break-up of Microsoft into disparate companies. It could, for instance, be divided into two businesses, one making operating systems and the other delivering products for the Internet. Such draconian medicine has only been successfully administered twice before - in the cases of Standard Oil and AT&T. An attempt in the early Eighties to dismantle IBM failed.

At a minimum, both Mr Klein and the 19-odd states are thought to be demanding that Microsoft strip from Windows 98 any automatic function giving users access to the World Wide Web via Microsoft's own

browser, the Internet Explorer. The so-called "bundling" of the browser into Windows has been at the heart of the Justice Department's tug-of-war with Microsoft, which dates back to the launch of Windows 95.

Among the perceived victims of Microsoft's virtual hegemony is Netscape Communications, which pioneered the browser device with its Netscape Navigator. Netscape's once-mighty share of the browser market has slumped since Microsoft integrated the Explorer into Windows 95.

But Mr Klein is thought also to be targeting the licensing agreements granted by Microsoft to the myriad PC manufacturers. He may, for example, be seeking an end to

a condition that the Windows menu, which instantly offers such functions as the Explorer, must be the first thing that appears on the screen when their PCs are powered up by users.

If those agreements are loosened companies such as Compaq or Dell could customise their products to display alternative start-up menus offering functions produced by other software makers, such as the Netscape Navigator.

At the core of the Justice Department's action is the fear that with the Internet Explorer, Microsoft will for ever be able to control the gateway to a new and potentially monopolistic business in all kinds of online transacting. Already, consumers are beginning to use the Internet to buy books,

cars, holidays and make stock investments. The scope is only just beginning to be understood.

There remains some doubt as to whether the Justice Department has the legal case to win any wide-ranging action against Microsoft in the courts. It would have to prove not just that Microsoft has achieved a near-monopoly but that it has been acting illegally to protect and expand it. Until yesterday, Microsoft had been defiant, arguing that the government had no right to force it to rip anything from its platform. Microsoft indicated, however, that it was still hoping to get the new software into shops as it has previously planned by 25 June.

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Outlook, page 25

By Andrew Marshall
in Washington

IF YOU want to believe the rhetoric, Joel Klein is all that stands between America and a vast wave of mega-mergers that will turn the country into one big corporation. As head of the antitrust division of the US Department of Justice, Mr Klein spearheads the nation's competition policy. He is the guiding intelligence behind the campaign to loosen Microsoft's hold on the Internet browser market.

The Microsoft case itself is important enough. But America is currently convulsed by a wave of huge corporate tie-ups, prompting the White House to set up a special team to investigate and appraise the trend. The case against Bill Gates seems to be not just a blow for change in the booming computer software market, but perhaps a straw in the wind for something much bigger. After decades of laissez-faire regulation, is America returning to its older trust-busting ways?

Rhetoric is certainly not Mr Klein's speciality. He is regarded within the legal business as one of the sharpest minds around, but few see him as a crusader. He is described by those who know him as a pragmatist, and though he has known Bill Clinton for many years, few see him in party terms.

Born and raised in the Bronx, Mr Klein, 51, is a product of the elite Harvard Law School. After working as a clerk in the Supreme Court - a highly sought post for young lawyers - he founded his own law firm, before fate brought him to the White House. The suicide of Deputy White House counsel Vince Foster in 1993 took him straight into the legal maelstrom that surrounds President Clinton, advising the First Couple on the Whitewater affair as well as coaching Ruth Bader Ginsburg for her Supreme Court confirmation hearing.

Some are critical, seeing him as a publicity-seeker. "If you want to understand him, don't look at him in ideological terms," says one Washington lawyer. "Look in pure ego terms." Some fellow lawyers see him as a highly political player, who is not unaware of the gains to his department and his career from the Microsoft case. It is fair to say, though, that ego is hardly a rare commodity in Washington; and no one questions Klein's assiduity and intelligence. "He is very analytical, very thoughtful, and very highly thought of,"

says another lawyer. When he was up for confirmation by the Senate last year, there was widespread suspicion that he was a man who would accommodate himself to big business. The Microsoft case has changed that impression. Suddenly, the campaign against monopoly seems to be on the march again.

Antitrust has played a vital role in shaping modern America, from the destruction of the trusts at the beginning of the century through to the attacks on IBM and AT&T that helped to define the modern telecommunications and computer industries. The anti-monopoly Sherman Act, under which Mr Klein is acting, was passed 105 years ago, part of a wave of populist reaction against the rapid industrialisation after the Civil War. But it was not until the arrival of Thurman Arnold, one of Mr Klein's most distinguished predecessors, in the 1940s, that it really took off. Acting with like-minded judges, Mr Arnold turned it into a powerful tool to break up monopolies, stop price-fixing and prevent agreements that were in restraint of trade.

But from the late 1970s, there was cooling-off. It was no longer fashionable to regard antitrust as a tool of social policy. Instead, more concern was paid to global competition, to the gains that might be realised through mergers and acquisitions, and to free markets.

But despite the latest burst of activism, there is little sign that either Mr Klein or the Justice Department are going back in time. They are trying to work out new approaches, lawyers say. "You're seeing a lot more use of empirical evidence, econometric modelling, and economic analysis," said one lawyer. "There is more of a focus on the possible efficiency gains from competition, and Mr Klein (whose first college degree was in economics) has embraced and advanced this."

The Justice Department is also trying to work out how to cope with triple challenges: a vast increase in the amount of merger and acquisition activity, an increase in cross-border activity which requires working with authorities in other countries and a surge in high-technology cases. Mr Klein has indicated his interest in updating laws that were designed for use in traditional industries such as steel and oil to the information age. Nothing could be more important in that context than the World-Wide Web, and the software to access it.

What they could do to Microsoft

Option 1:

Spin off Internet Explorer

The least radical option: Forcing Microsoft to spin off its Internet Explorer web browser would halt the group's attempt to dominate the Internet in the way it currently controls the market for Personal Computer software. It would counter the current allegation against Microsoft - that packaging Internet Explorer with its Windows operating system stifles competitors from other browser groups such as Netscape. Microsoft's browser would then have to compete for customers rather than coming ready installed as part of every PC which is sold. However, such a course of action would leave the rest of the Microsoft empire intact, leaving it free to find other ways to make the most of the Internet.

Option 2:

Separate the operating system from the applications

Rather than simply forcing Microsoft to spin off its Internet Explorer web browser, this option would require Microsoft to separate its operating system from its applications software. Such a move would force Microsoft to license the Windows operating system to other software makers, allowing them to package Windows and its operating system together. Microsoft has had a head start over companies selling competing packages, such as WordPerfect and Lotus. If the move were turned into separate companies, customers would be able to choose whether they wanted to run applications on their Microsoft operating system or on a competing one, leaving it free to find other ways to make the most of the Internet.

Option 3:

Force Microsoft to license its operating system

Under the most radical option, which would turn Microsoft into a mere software supplier, the company would be forced to license its operating system to other software makers, allowing them to package Windows and its operating system together. Microsoft has had a head start over companies selling competing packages, such as WordPerfect and Lotus. If the move were turned into separate companies, customers would be able to choose whether they wanted to run applications on their Microsoft operating system or on a competing one, leaving it free to find other ways to make the most of the Internet.

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Yesterday in the markets

STOCK MARKETS

Indices	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	5940.50	-24.40	-0.41	6150.50	4382.80	3.54
FTSE 250	5705.00	6.70	0.12	5794.00	4384.20	2.79
FTSE 350	2804.00	-6.90	-0.24	2838.70	2141.80	3.40
FTSE All Share	2819.21	-7.70	-0.28	2861.12	2106.59	3.27
FTSE Europe	2748.20	5.50	0.20	2743.70	2182.10	2.90
FTSE Pacific	1473.50	-4.60	-0.31	1468.30	1225.20	3.08
FTSE Asia	1108.20	6.30	0.57	1102.90	865.00	7.05
FTSE EURO 100	1015.95	-0.40	-0.04			
Dow Jones	9194.40	-15.94	-0.17	9261.91	8971.32	1.94
Nikkei	15307.69	-38.12	-0.24	20910.79	14488.21	0.99
Hang Seng	9591.95	122.66	1.29	18820.31	7908.13	4.17
Dax	6361.22	-15.65	-0.25	6442.08	3487.24	1.51

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling	UK 10 year gilt	US long bond
3 months 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	3 months 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	3 months 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr
UK 7.48 0.89 7.50 0.56	UK 6.20 0.50 6.30 0.30	US 5.70 0.11 5.91 0.34
US 5.70 0.11 5.91 0.34	US 5.70 0.11 5.91 0.34	US 5.70 0.11 5.91 0.34
Japan 0.55 0.04 0.58 0.28	Japan 0.55 0.04 0.58 0.28	Japan 0.55 0.04 0.58 0.28
Germany 3.63 0.47 3.94 0.62	Germany 3.63 0.47 3.94 0.62	Germany 3.63 0.47 3.94 0.62

MAIN PRICE CHANGES	Commodities	Metals	Grains
Cash Telecom 689.90 257.50 15.36	Oil 22.50 0.14 0.62	Gold 347.47 0.10 0.29	Wheat 11.15 0.05 0.45
Micro Focus 645.00 70.00 12.17	Iron 48.50 0.20 0.41	Silver 5.56 0.10 1.87	Barley 11.15 0.05 0.45
St James's Place 342.00 20.00 6.21	Alum 48.50 0.20 0.41	Base Rates 7.25 0.25	Maize 11.15 0.05 0.45
Hardy Oil & Gas 273.50 13.50 5.20	Assoc BR Food 546.00 26 4.39		
Ladbroke Group 342.00 17.50 5.39	Premier Oil 48.00 2 3.92		

CURRENCIES

\$/£	DM/£	¥/£
at 5pm	at 5pm	at 5pm
Dollar 1.6305 -0.010 1.6418	Sterling 0.6133 +0.000 0.6092	Yen 114.90 2.80 111.48
D-Mark 2.9055 +0.510 2.7888	D-Mark 1.7813 +0.000 1.6990	Yen 134.21 +0.05 117.15
Yen 103.10 -0.20 98.30	Yen 110.20 +0.00 102.50	

OTHER INDICATORS	at 5pm	at 5pm	at 5pm
Brent Oil (\$)	14.35 0.14 18.27	GDP	114.90 2.80 111.48
Gold (\$)	297.95 -0.30 347.47	RPI	160.80 3.50 155.36
Silver (\$)	5.56 0.10 4.87	Base Rates	7.25 0.25

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.5038	Malta (lira)	0.6165
Austria (schilling)	19.72	Mexican (nuevo peso)	12.56
Belgium (francs)	57.93	Netherlands (guilders)	3.1616
Canada (\$)	2.2935	New Zealand (\$)	2.9488
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8225	Norway (krone)	11.87
Denmark (krone)	10.76	Paraguay (guarani)	284.36
Finland (markka)	8.9979	Saudi Arabia (riyal)	5.9276
France (francs)	9.4172	Singapore (\$)	2.5675
Germany (marks)	2.8163	Spain (pesetas)	238.07
Greece (drachma)	484.82	South Africa (rand)	7.9594
Hong Kong (\$)	12.22	Sweden (krona)	12.21
Ireland (pounds)	1.1118	Switzerland (francs)	2.2424
India (rupees)	60.28	Thailand (bahts)	57.19
Israel (shekels)	5.5390	Turkey (lira)	369.032
Italy (lira)	2.2778	USA (\$)	1.5891
Japan (yen)	214.31		
Malaysia (ringgits)	5.9582		

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

Banks ready to pull out of Indonesia

By Stephen Vines in Hong Kong and Lea Paterson in London

FOREIGN banks and broking companies yesterday began to shut down operations and pulling out staff from Indonesia as the rioting escalated.

ABN Amro has shut down its 600-strong Indonesian operations, and Deutsche Bank has temporarily closed its two branches in the region. John Ellis, senior vice president at BankAmerica, said: "The panic buttons were hit this morning." The US bank has begun to evacuate staff from Indonesia.

An ABN Amro spokesperson said evacuation was an option for the Dutch bank, one of the largest foreign banks in the region. "We will do whatever we feel is necessary to protect our staff," he said. The bank was monitoring developments "minute-by-minute".

Staff were reportedly sent home early from both Merrill Lynch and Bangkok Bank. HSBC, Standard Chartered and ING Barings said they hoped to open for business today, but were keeping the situation under review.

A spokesman for one of the foreign banks said: "I understand staff were watching cars burning from the bank's window." Another said: "We've advised our staff not to travel and some have started moving their families out of the country."

The banks said their primary concern was for the safety of their staff. Most were unwilling to discuss their contingency plans, saying that could endanger their employees.

Both BankAmerica and Standard Chartered are understood to have around 500 staff in the region. ING Barings has about 160.

Other foreign companies are believed to be preparing evacuation plans.

Meanwhile, the financial markets virtually ground to a halt yesterday but not before the local currency suffered

yet another 10 per cent sell-off, resulting in its value falling by 25 per cent since the latest round of trouble began on Tuesday.

Many local broking houses closed for business, followed by banks and other financial institutions. Some brokers stopped taking orders because of fears that they would never be settled.

A spokesman for Credit Lyonnais Securities said the situation was being reviewed on an "hour-by-hour" basis. Ethnic Chinese, who have borne the brunt of the looting and burning, are disproportionately represented in the finance industry. For that reason many employees left to be with their families. Michael Lim, the treasurer at Standard Chartered Bank in Jakarta, was quoted as saying, "I can't find my wife. I am very depressed."

The house of Liem Sioe Liong, Indonesia's most prominent Chinese businessman, was looted and burned yesterday. Mr Liem controls the Salim group and has a 40 per cent share in the regional conglomerate First Pacific.

Meanwhile shares in companies such as the Humpass group and Bismantara Citra, controlled by members of President Suharto's family, saw their prices plunge by as much as 25 per cent.

The Jakarta Post reported Tanti Abeng, the state enterprise minister, as saying that foreign buyers have withdrawn from two privatisation projects in light of the current situation. That cast doubt on 12 other projects high on the list of requirements laid down by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in return for Indonesia's \$43bn (£24bn) bailout.

Earlier in the week Indonesia indicated that even that amount was insufficient. Giandjar Kartasasmita, the economic co-ordinating minister, said: "We'll definitely need more."

Negotiations with creditors over the nation's \$80bn private sector foreign debt are



A car blazes outside a bank in Jakarta yesterday, where the financial centre has been disrupted. Reuters

still under way but making little progress. A meeting in Frankfurt on 26 May will see if further repayment extensions can be agreed.

Although the troubles in Indonesia sent shares prices down in other parts of the region earlier in the week, there was little response yes-

terday although the Singapore market, which has the closest connections with Indonesia, fell by 2.3 per cent.

Nevertheless the situation in Indonesia is adding to a general gloom which refuses to lift from Asian markets. "Most of the markets are going to revisit the low points of February

and January," said Hong Kong based Peter Churchhouse of Morgan Stanley, which is advising clients to be "underweight in equities right now".

Russell Jones of Lehman Brothers in Hong Kong said: "It's a very negative environment. The momentum is likely to remain downward for some time."

Seagram in talks on stake in PolyGram

SEAGRAM, the Canadian drinks and entertainment giant, confirmed yesterday it was in talks with Philips Electronics over a possible acquisition of Philips' stake in PolyGram, the world's leading music company. Discussions are continuing and the parties are now inviting PolyGram to participate in the discussions, Seagram said. In a brief statement, Seagram said no assurance could be provided that an agreement could be reached. Philips issued a similar statement earlier. Philips owns 75 per cent of PolyGram.

Fund glory for Soros

SOROS Fund Management is the top emerging market equity fund manager for the last five years, *Microcap Emerging Market Fund Manager* said. Soros Fund Management had gained 184.26 per cent, the best five-year weighted composite return in the global emerging markets stocks sector. Soros Fund Management was trailed by Paris-based FP Consult, up 139.81 per cent, and London's Emritage Management, with a 127.64 per cent rise.

Big rise in BAA traffic

PASSENGER traffic at the seven airports run by BAA, the airport operator, rose 9.8 per cent in April from a year earlier. Short-haul European charter traffic rose 21.9 per cent and North Atlantic services 11.3 per cent. BAA handled 8.8 million passengers at its airports in April, with London's Heathrow registering its largest monthly rise for more than two years of 7.3 per cent.

Warning hits Iliion shares

SHARES in the information technology company Iliion Group slumped by 76p, or 40 per cent, to 118.5p after it issued a profit warning. "Following difficult trading conditions in the UK during the first four months of 1998, it does not expect to meet market profit expectations for 1998," it said. The company said its trade in March has been in line with budget but after that it has been "exceptionally disappointing" in the UK.

Bluebird Toys offer raised

GUINNESS PEAT Group yesterday raised its offer for Bluebird Toys to 116p a share, valuing the company at £48.2m. GPG, the investment company chaired by New Zealander Ron Brerley, had said in March it was considering its position over Bluebird after US toy company Mattel trumped its bid with an agreed 111p per share offer. Mattel's offer valued Bluebird at £46m and compares with GPG's original 101p hostile bid.

Storms cost insurers £7m

INDEPENDENT Insurance Group said yesterday that storms in January and the floods during Easter would result in an overall estimated net loss of £7m. It said several areas of its operation had produced a significant increase level of new business and its commercial accounts continued to perform well. The market welcomed the overall trading update, marking Independent Insurance's shares up 60p at 177.5p.

Sales up 8.5% at WM stores

WILLIAM MORRISON Supermarkets said trading was "entirely satisfactory" with sales 8.5 per cent higher than last year, including a like-for-like contribution of 3.3 per cent. Ken Morrison, chairman, said the chain has "once again seen record sales and profit growth" and has extended its development programme with plans to open seven superstores during 1999, creating up to 2,400 jobs.

£7m take-off for former footballer

By Michael Harrison

A FORMER amateur footballer who helped launch an airline with an aircraft borrowed from a German museum will be £7m richer when the business floats on the stock market next month.

Terry Liddiard, who played centre-half for Headington United FC (the forerunner of Oxford United) in the old Southern League, will have a stake of around 7 per cent in British Regional Airlines, which is expected to be valued at £100m.

Mr Liddiard, chief executive, and 1,450 staff at British Regional Airlines will own about 10 per cent of the business in total. The current owner of the group, the British Midland chairman Sir Michael Bishop, is reducing his holding from 90 per cent to just under 30 per cent through an institutional placing.

The flotation will raise about £25m of new money,

enabling British Regional Airlines to expand its operations rapidly with a fleet of Embraer 145 jets.

The group operates 86 routes under the Manx Airlines brand and as a franchisee of British Airways, and carried 2.5 million passengers last year. Mr Liddiard joined Manx as a founder director in 1982 when the airline was relaunched with just three aircraft, including a Vickers Viscount and a turboprop Fokker F27 on loan from a German museum.

It is already BA's biggest franchisee and the flotation is expected to see a further strengthening of its links with BA with British Regional Airlines taking over more BA services from Manchester and Southampton.

The group made pre-tax profits of £3.8m on sales of £165m last year but analysts are pencilling in profits of more than £5m for the current year.

First link opens in telecoms network

By Peter Thal Larsen

THE FIGHT for dominance in the European telecom market intensified as Esprit Telecom, the Reading-based operator, opened a new high-speed link between Paris and London.

The link, which is the first part of a network which will Esprit hopes eventually stretch across most of Europe, demonstrates the growing demand for cross-border telecom services.

Graham Hall, Esprit's UK managing director, pointed out that business telecom users are increasingly demanding telecom networks which link seamlessly across national borders. However, national operators such as British Telecom find it hard to offer these services.

"Previously if I wanted to buy a telephone circuit I'd have to buy half a circuit from BT and go to France Telecom to provide the other half," he said, adding that Esprit's strat-

egy was to consider Europe as a single market.

Esprit now plans to build other loops stretching through Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany and Spain. They should be ready for launch next year.

The London-Paris link employs the latest "self-healing" fibre-optic technology. This allows Esprit to offer a range of services including high-speed data transmission and video conferencing at substantially cheaper rates than are currently on offer.

Some analysts expressed concern that Esprit had not actually laid its own cable. Instead, the company pieced the link together by buying bits of cable from other operators such as Racal Telecom and the French motorway operator. It then uses advanced computer systems to operate the network.

However, Esprit insists that building its own network would have delayed the group's entry into the market, giving other

operators a chance to jump in. "If we had laid our own cable it would have added taken 18 months longer to get it ready," said Jim Reynolds, chief operating officer.

Esprit's move demonstrates the opportunities in continental Europe for fast-moving telecom operators. Yesterday Colt Telecom, the US-funded group which is building local networks in major European cities, reported a 34 per cent increase in first-quarter revenues.

Colt, which already has a local network in the City of London, plans to build high-speed fibre-optic "rings" in 12 European business centres. It is in talks to buy a network in Amsterdam from Telecom Noord West, a subsidiary of a local electricity company, for £41m.

Shares in Colt yesterday surged 257.5p to 1940p as Morgan Stanley, the stockbroker, issued an upbeat recommendation. In the past year, the shares have soared from less than 300p.

Warm winter knocks £92m off BG profits

By Michael Harrison

THE unseasonably warm weather in the first quarter melted a £92m hole in profits at the gas pipeline operator BG as customers switched off the central heating in response to rising temperatures.

BG, which was split off from the British Gas trading arm Centrica a year ago, said operating profits dipped by 6 per cent to £552m in the January-March period.

Transco, its pipeline arm, also felt the effects of the 13 per cent price cut imposed by the regulator Ofgas the previous autumn. This sliced £140m from profits but BG said the reduction was partially offset by a £45m fall in depreciation charges and £57m of cost savings.

Staff levels at Transco fell by 432 to 15,452 at the end of March. Overall Transco's operating profits fell by £62m to £465m.

However, BG's exploration and production business made a strong contribution, posting a 57 per cent increase in operating profits to £63m on the back of a 48 per cent rise in production volumes.

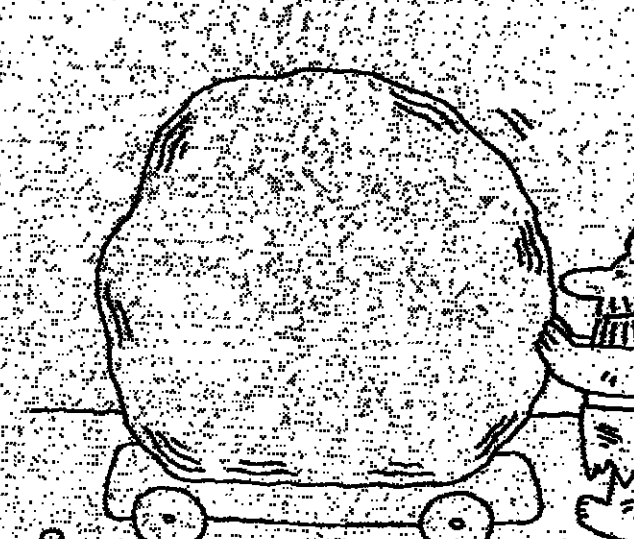
Despite a near 20 per cent fall in oil and gas prices on the previous year, operating profit per barrel was up by 6 per cent

as BG's drive to cut production costs began to pay dividends.

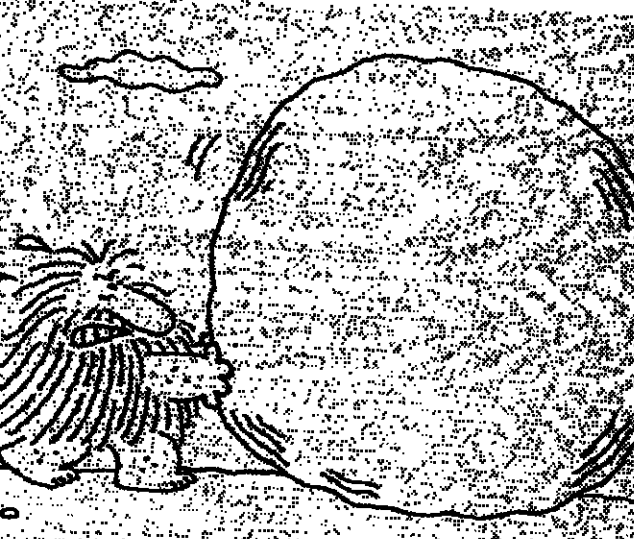
The warm weather in February, when temperatures rose into the mid 60s Fahrenheit, took its toll on domestic gas consumption. But the actual volume of gas transported during the quarter was the same as 1997 because of the increased demand from large industrial users.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Alcan Power (Q)	51.7m (46.8m)	4,208m (4,798m)	6.2p (7.0p)	2.3p (2.0p)
Altria (Q)	94.4m (91.2m)	5,886m (5,083m)	0.4p (2.4p)	1.5p (1.25p)
Bank of Ireland (Q)	88 - (-)	530.4m (595.0m)	0.4p (0.2p)	23.0p (17.75p)
BSG (Q)	21.3m (18.3m)	524.0m (514.0m)	70.5p (72.2p)	nil
British & World (Q)	- (-)	91.2m (8.7m)	- (-)	nil
Car Group (Q)	198.0m (88.0m)	3,305m (2,697m)	5.3p (5.0p)	1.72p (1.50p)
A to the Gravelly (Q)	56.4m (48.9m)	3,211m (3,311m)	17.05p (17.50p)	23.0p (18.0p)
Jersey Electricity (Q)	- (-)	3,852m (2,988m)	2.61p (1.50p)	23.0p (18.0p)
Wales & West (Q)	5.7m (4.8m)	0.234m (0.103m)	0.33p (0.11p)	nil
Chaparral (Q)	38.5m (35.0m)	6.4m (6.7m)	8.8p (9.2p)	4.5p (4.1p)
Scottish Radio (Q)	21.2m (18.3m)	5,788m (4,491m)	14.2 (10.8p)	3.6p (3.0p)
Shredded (Q)	- (-)	3,316m (2,707)	3.1p (3.2p)	0.85p (0.75p)
Thamesme (Q)	14.9m (12.7m)	0.902m (0.800m)	10.3p (8.9p)	5.5p (5.3p)
(Q) - Final (Q) - Interim (Q) - Quarterly EPS is pre-tax and pre-exceptional. Dividend to be paid as a PD				




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OUTLOOK ON THE DANGERS FACING BILL GATES, IMPROVING BRITAIN'S COMPETITIVENESS, AND THE MORE TAKEOVER BATTLE

HIGH DRAMA as Bill Gates and his legal team flew to Washington DC in an attempt to head off with concessions what was being billed as the biggest trust busting case in the US since the breakup of AT & T. Is it too late for that now, or can Mr Gates still hope to wriggle out of the US Justice Department's clutches?

Whatever the answer, Mr Gates must be acutely aware of the dangers of taking on US regulators. IBM was tied up for 19 years in an antitrust suit that came close to destroying the company. Rather than concentrating on the marketplace, IBM was instead forced to waste huge amounts of money on legal fees and the case became an all consuming passion for management. In the end, the Justice department admitted it had no case but it was by then a pyrrhic victory. In the meantime Apple and others had crept up behind and stolen its future.

Bill Gates, head and founder of Microsoft, has earned and deserves much of the wealth, praise and admiration heaped on him by the success of his company. But like all monopolists, he has been arrogant and careless with his future in resisting the very real concerns of the market and his would be competitors. It is often said that the Microsoft monopoly is somehow different from all monopolies that have gone before, that it was created by the market and that there is therefore no law capable of or justified in attacking it.

And certainly in some respects the computer operating system on which it is based doesn't behave like traditional monopolies. Normally monopolists use their dominant position to restrict output, stifle in-

novation and competition, and raise prices. In today's software industry, the reverse is occurring. Output is rising, prices are falling, and new entrants are continually entering the market place. Given this benign backdrop, how can the US government turn on its most successful company?

Well, this is a new industry, isn't it, but don't believe it has entirely changed the usual rules of commerce. What Mr Gates and his company does is not so very different from what the old robber barons of the oil, rail and telephone and steel industries used to do. The initial monopoly of the operating system may have been created by the market but it has since been ruthlessly exploited to stifle and inhibit those forced to pass through its gateway. By behaving like this, Microsoft has laid itself open to a terrible fate perhaps not dissimilar to that which befell IBM.

The flip side of high productivity

THERE IS one very simple way for the Government to bridge Britain's productivity gap with the rest of the advanced industrialised world. Introduce a national minimum wage that throws millions out of work, get the same level of output from fewer people and watch the rise in productivity go clean off the scale.

This, of course, was not the kind of discussion that Gordon Brown encouraged over croissants and coffee with the bevy of businessmen hauled into Downing Street yesterday morning to hear his plans for closing our yawning and rather alarming gap

in competitiveness with the US. Nor should it have been. The Germans and French have discovered that the flip side of higher productivity based on fewer people working fewer hours tends to be longer dole queues and higher social employment costs.

This makes it a nil-sum game quite apart from demonstrating how dangerous it is to diagnose a country's economic ills solely on indices of output per capita.

The clever chaps from McKinsey, hired to provide some intellectual backbone to the Chancellor's campaign, tell us that French food retailers are 25 per cent more productive than Tesco. What they are really telling us is that the French spend more on food in bigger outlets which proves precisely nothing.

Fortunately there is more to McKinsey's analysis than that. Their report also demonstrates the ineluctable link between low levels of capital investment and low labour productivity. This cannot be explained away by structural differences between the UK and other economies. Given the same tax regime, labour force, supply base and customers, Japanese transplant factories in the US and UK achieve productivity levels on a par with those back home and way above what indigenous manufacturers can achieve.

That, in turn, begs the question of the best way to bridge the productivity gap. The glib solution is to reach for fiscal incentives and support programmes to encourage more investment and raise the skills base.

But the lesson from the Japanese car transplants is that improved productivity comes from the spur of greater competition. Nissan and Toyota have forced Ford

French farce at Decaux

IT WAS surely Roger Parry disguised as Jean-Claude Decaux who flew a party of journalists to Decaux's headquarters just outside Paris on Wednesday. Unfortunately, the pretence wasn't as effective as it should have been, for once there, the chief executive of More Group gave himself away by camping up his performance of the French outdoor advertising tycoon to an absurd degree.

Come off it Mr Parry, we're not that glibly you know. M. Decaux would never have said those things. You surely didn't expect us to fall for it did you? Certainly he looked the part, with all that glib waving of the arms, but he gave himself away in what he said.

Mr Parry's bravura performance on the lawn outside Decaux's Plaisir headquarters needs some explaining. Decaux is one of France's leading outdoor advertising companies and it is bidding for its British rival More Group. Mr Parry, who heads More Group, doesn't much like the idea of being taken over by his arch French rival and he's trying to get the takeover referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, only he's not allowed to say that because he's already recommended a lower offer from Clear Channel of the

US. Shareholders would get awfully angry if they thought their chief executive was trying to deprive them of a higher offer.

It was thus that a dastardly plan came to be hatched. Mr Parry would get the French to admit publicly that their bid was fundamentally anti-competitive and monopolistic in intention and the Office of Fair Trading would thus be persuaded to refer it. But nobody believed he would go this far. On his way to meet the journalists, M. Decaux was kidnapped and Mr Parry put in his place. Once properly disguised, Mr Parry set to work. It didn't matter if there was less competition in Europe as a result of this bid, he told incredulous hacks. The main thing is to keep the Americans out, because otherwise they'll make things very difficult in the market place for European companies like Decaux.

The real giveaway, however, came when he claimed that a monopoly could be positive for smaller cities and that the problem with politicians was that they were not far sighted enough to realise this. This was surely taking the joke too far. But there was worse. He then went on to say that Decaux could afford to pay so much for More Group because it was "answerable to no one". If that hasn't persuaded the Office of Fair Trading, which yesterday passed its advice on the matter to Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, nothing will. Unless a very narrow definition of what constitutes a competitive market is adopted by officials at the OFT, it still looks, on balance, as if Decaux will escape reference. Mr Parry ought to be congratulated, nonetheless, on a splendid last ditch attempt to change everyone's mind.

WHC share sale under investigation

By Andrew Yates

THE Stock Exchange is understood to be investigating share dealings by Philip Easterman, the finance director of Westminster Health Care (WHC) who quit today.

Shares in the retirement home group tumbled 66.5p to 339p yesterday after it warned profits would fall well below City expectations. The profit warning wiped £44m off the value of WHC. The announcement comes just weeks after Mr Easterman raised £79,200 by selling 20,000 shares at 396p each. He made an extra £11,400 from the sale compared with the price he would have got if he sold the shares after the profit warning. According to sources close to the company, he sold shares without obtaining authorisation from senior directors.

Mr Easterman has resigned from the group with immediate effect. He is to receive a pay off of £100,000, equivalent to a year's salary.

WHC has unveiled a catalogue of problems which will dent current year profits. Mr Easterman is understood to be at fault for delaying in forming the board of the full extent of the problems.

"He could have told the board sooner," said one industry source.

He is being replaced by Stephen Purse, a senior audit

partner at KPMG, the chartered accountants.

WHC said profits for the six months to May would fall below the £8.4m the group made in the first half of its financial year. Its main problem has been the performance of two secure homes designed to house mentally ill patients. The number of patients at these units in Newbury and Milton Keynes has fallen well below expectations.

The group has also had teething problems at Libra, the psychiatric business it purchased last autumn. City observers believe that Mr Easterman would have been in a position to be aware of these impending problems. Pat Carter, chief executive of WHC, confirmed that the decision to part with Mr Easterman was taken in the last few weeks.

Mr Carter said: "Some months ago we decided we needed to upgrade the job (of finance director). The recent events confirmed we were right to do so."

The company is believed to have informed the Stock Exchange of Mr Easterman's share dealings. Another industry source said: "Mr Easterman has been made to look like a blithering idiot. The company is hopping mad that it failed to recognise a problem which happened in their own backyard."

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Jean Claude Decaux (left), chairman, and his son Jean Francois, at their Paris factory. If Decaux's bid for More is cleared it would control over 90 per cent of the UK market

German bidder joins the battle for More

By Nigel Cope
Associate City Editor

A FOURTH player has been drawn into the increasingly acrimonious bid battle for More Group, the outdoor advertising company, as the saga moves into its final stages.

It emerged yesterday that Wall, a German supplier of street furniture, has written to local authorities in London in an attempt to exploit the confusion over More Group's position.

Decaux, the French group, is awaiting clearance from the competition authorities for its £475m cash offer for More. Margaret Beckett, the Trade and Industry Secretary, is due

to rule on the offer next week.

If successful, the bid, which trumped an earlier £425m offer by Clear Channel Communications, the US giant, would give Decaux more than 90 per cent of the UK market for street furniture such as bus shelters, street toilets and wastepaper baskets.

However, Clear Channel denied a suggestion it had timed up Wall as an alternative target if it loses the fight with Decaux.

Mark Mays, Clear Channel's president, said: "We have talked to everybody, but we have made no overtures about buying their businesses." Nobody at Wall could be reached for comment. Wall's letter, which is signed

by Hans Wall, the company's founder, and dated 28 April, was explained out the company's product range. It sings the praises of Wall's City Toilet, which it claims has "broadened the prospects of disabled persons for easier access to, and participation in, public life".

The letter continues: "All other Wall products might also help London to better meet the needs of its citizens." It concludes by offering to set up a demonstration in London.

Meanwhile, Decaux yesterday confirmed it had hired GJW, the lobbying firm, to argue its case in Westminster. Outlook, this page

Ilion shares dive after profit warning

By Les Paterson

SHARES in the information technology company Ilion Group slumped by 76p, or 40 per cent, to 118.5p after it issued a profit warning yesterday.

In a statement to the City, Ilion said: "Following difficult trading conditions in the UK during the first four months of 1998, it does not expect to meet market profit expectations for 1998."

The company said its trade in March had been in line with budget but after that it had been "exceptionally disappointing" in the UK. "UK sales in the first four months have only grown by 22 per cent, considerably below budget," it said.

Gross margins in the UK had improved from their low point in the fourth quarter of 1997 and were in line with budget, Ilion said. "The board expects to achieve substantial profits, but it is too early in the year to be precise. The consensus market forecast for pre-tax profit was £8m."

Ilion's cost base is predominantly fixed in the short term and the shortfall in sales has translated into a significant decrease in profits relative to budget, the company said.

In its results statement in March, Ilion said it was now operating in a less predictable environment and that markets outside of France had started slowly in 1998.

"That volatility has continued," it said. In France the sales growth this year has been around 70 per cent with a consequent greater contribution to group profits but it was insufficient to compensate for the shortfall in the UK.

Wayne Channon, Ilion Group chairman, said: "I am confident in the strategy of retaining our market leadership in the UK and we will ensure that the required actions are taken to protect this position, albeit at the expense of short-term profitability."

— Agencies

Warning of new pensions disaster

By Andrew Verity

THE Government was yesterday warned it would trigger a fresh pensions mis-selling disaster if it brought in a new vehicle without wholesale reform.

In a centre-piece of its plans for welfare reform, the Government is pledged to introduce "stakeholder pensions", a new tax-exempt pension plan aimed at bringing pensions to 8 million people who have no retirement savings.

But leading actuaries Bacon & Woodrow said stakeholder pensions would open the way for a repeat of the £12bn mis-selling scandal unless they were accompanied by fundamental reforms.

Speaking at the annual conference of the National Association of Pension Funds, Andrew Warwick-Thompson, B&W pensions expert, said: "We would implore [the Government], please don't introduce another pension regime on top of those we already have. If you push stakeholder pensions into the market as it stands at the moment there will be mis-selling."

The actuaries fear the Gov-

ernment's reforms will simply introduce another pension regime alongside the already complex rules for retirement saving, echoing the introduction of personal pensions in 1998.

This would open the way for unscrupulous salespeople to switch unwary savers into inferior schemes, just as they did in the case of personal pensions.

Pension funds have become concerned that stakeholder pensions will have to offer low charges and good value if they are to appeal to low-income savers. This would prompt savers to shift into stakeholder pensions and away from employer-sponsored schemes.

Pension funds, which control over £600bn and own over a third of equity on the stock market, already feel battered by Government reforms which have taken more than £5bn a year from their investment income.

The July Budget decision to axe the tax credit on dividends has prompted many funds to sell equities, which no longer offer such clear tax advantages, and buy Government gilts. Fund managers predict pension funds will increasingly shift into corporate debt.

Duty-free worries as Ronson's flame dims

By Peter Thal Larsen

RONSON, the troubled cigarette lighter maker which boasts Victor Kiam as its chairman, saw its flame grow weaker yesterday when it warned of escalating losses caused by increased re-organisation costs and stock provisions. The com-

pany has huge stockpiles of watches and ear-rings for the Ronson Duty Free subsidiary which sells gifts through airlines like BA. The stock includes 8,000 Montine watches against forecast sales of 800 this year and have never previously been accounted for.

The company said losses

for the year to December 1997 would now be in the region of £11.5m compared with previous estimates of around £7m. The shares lost a further 18 per cent of their value to close 1.75p lower at 5.75p. They stood at 65.75p three years ago.

Victor Kiam was in London yesterday for the board meet-

ing. It is understood that he is still supportive of the company. Charles Stanley, the company's broker, is helping arrange a £6m re-financing.

"A detailed announcement in relation to the progress of the fund raising will be made along with the preliminary announcement in the near fu-

ture," the company said.

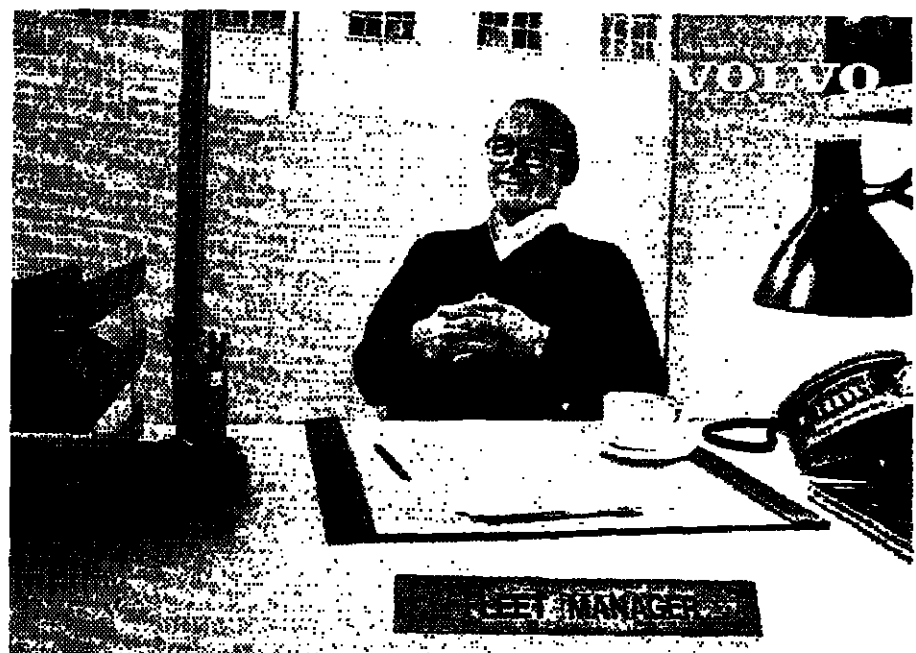
Yesterday's warning is the second in four months.

In March Victor Kiam, acquired 10 per cent of Ronson and became part-time chairman. He is expected to subscribe to the rights issue being organised by 17 per cent shareholder Albion consortium fund.

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High-priced trades stir up interest in Ladbroke

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

LADBROKE, the betting and hotel group, enlivened a dull day, galloping 17.5p to 34.2p. Two trades above the then ruling price created the excitement.

The stock market has waited for more than a year for Hilton Hotel Corporation to build a share stake.

HHC operates the US Hilton hotels spread with Ladbroke controlling the portfolio in the rest of the world. As part of an alliance established between HHC and Ladbroke the Americans promised to build a 5 per cent interest in the British group.

The Americans were expected to rely on the issue of new shares. But the latest shenanigans could indicate they have decided to buy through the stock market.

The two trades, thought to involve Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, were for 1 million and 4.25 million shares. They were completed at 340p when the price was nearer 325p.

The consequent interest was enough to make Ladbroke the most actively traded blue chip, with Seag putting volume at 17.7 million.

The leisure group is, however, still below its 358p peak hit earlier this year. A year ago the shares were 240p. This week I ad broke am-

This week Labrooke produced a confident trading statement although sentiment had earlier been dented by the referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission of the acquisition of the Coral betting shops chain.

Takeover rumours have occasionally wafted around the company. At one time Bass, the brewing and hotel group, was regarded as a possible predator. But its sale of the Coral business would suggest it is no longer interest-

Footsie ended 24.4 points off at 5,948.5; just 30 minutes before the close the fall was 54.6. The worsening situation in Asia, particularly Indone-

sia, and a resurrection of higher interest rate fears tormented the market. An uneven New York display was another inhibiting influence.

Still, the two main supporting indices blissfully ignored such restraints and moved to yet new highs.

Oil exploration shares flared on positive comments from Morgan Stanley and hopes of upbeat drilling reports in the next few weeks. Morgan's Nick Ansell highlighted the possibility of more consolidation and is thought

His projections lifted Enterprise 22p to 597p; Lasso 225p to 291p; Hardy 155p to

Monument said its rights issue had achieved a 95.4 per cent take-up and long time shareholder Electrifica of

Colt Telecom was another to collect a Morgan boost. The shares jumped 257.5p to a

Next, the fashion chain
locked by a profits warning in

March, fell 7p to 499.5p with
finance director David Keens
said to be alerting analysts

Share Spotlight
share price, pence

Year	Production (Thousands of Barrels per Day)
1960	305
1961	315
1962	335
1963	355
1964	365
1965	360
1966	345
1967	355
1968	340
1969	325
1970	315
1971	305
1972	295
1973	290
1974	295
1975	300
1976	295
1977	290
1978	295
1979	290
1980	295

Source: Delia Green

Month	Percentage (%)
M	~45
J	~45
J	~45
A	~45
S	~45
O	~45
N	~45
D	~45
J	~45
F	~45
M	~45
A	~45
M	~45

that women's wear sales remained sluggish and overstocking problems had yet to be overcome.

ned 17p to 897p as Merrill Lynch repeated its 1,000p target, and Hillsdown Holdings added 5.5p to 186.5p on

Suggestions of a deal between Powell Duffryn, off 1p at 600p, and Mersey docks, down 6.5p at 602.5p, appeared to be wide of the mark.

made a strong debut, closing at 275.5p from a 235p placing. Arlen, the electrical equipment group, gained 4p to 125p after duly confirming planned a number of disposals; Trust Motor advanced to 181p as another bid an-

approach was received. The company has had unsuccessful negotiations over a sale to management. On Tuesday Nicholas Barr, who led the short-term buyout, quit.

Air London, the air charter broker which has denied any takeover approach, climbed another 40p to 440p, peak. The shares have nearly doubled since February.

The flame at **Ronson**, the lighter group, is just about flickering. It expects losses to £115m; the shares

Computer shares had another strong session, gaining per cent. Micro Focus, on figures, jumped 70p to 645p;urity 36.5p to 821.5p and Ad-

MT Computing dropped 25p to 1,107.5p. But after chairman Michael Tilbrook sold 10,000 shares at 1,275p. He left with 4.7 per cent. And a profits warnings hitting off 76p at 112.5p.

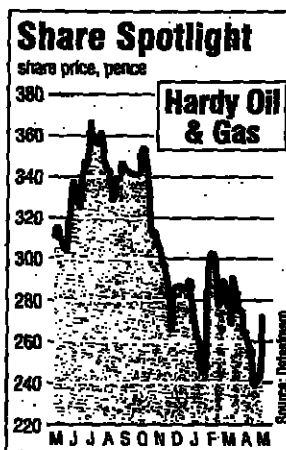
Distributor Abacus Polar as another mauled by a profits warning, falling 29.5p to 96.5p. **Ferguson International** tumbled 11.5p to 93.5p in response to a profits slump.

TAKING STOCK

WATCH Hadleigh, the engineer. There is talk of corporate activity. The share rose 12p to 250p; they have risen from 193.5p this month. Last year profits hit £2.1m and a similar result seems likely for the year ended in March.

PROMINENT information, offering a newspaper monitoring and information service, claims the distinction of being the first Ofex company to have a rights issue fully underwritten. A £900,000 call has been backed by Hong Kong-based Cathay Pharechem Trading. The shares are 25.5p; dealings in the nil paid rights start next month.

STAKE building at Reece, the distributor? There is talk that a construction group is in the market picking up shares. An institutional sale of around 5 per cent was quickly absorbed. Reece shares firmed 0.25p to 2.25p, a 12 month high.

[illegible]

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

WHC can get over this glitch

WESTMINSTER Health Care has got itself into a pickle. To issue a profit warning is bad enough. But when your finance director sells a big chunk of shares just two weeks before it is announced to the Stock Exchange it raises a serious concern about the management of the company.

If, as sources close to the company maintain, Philip Easterman acted on his own then he was at best misguided; at worst he faces further action by the Stock Exchange. The fact that he failed to inform the group's other executives about the profit progress of some of its subsidiaries suggests internal controls were found wanting.

In any case he had to go and if the company can salvage any credit from this situation it is by the way it organised a quick replacement. This unsavoury episode has undoubtedly tainted the reputation of WHC in the City. The profit warning came because it failed to attract the number of patients it forecast to its secure homes and suffered delays in opening new psychiatric units. But at least the end to these problems are in sight. Government cutbacks and intense competition has also hit revenues from its brain injury business.

In other words the string of problems have put WHC's plans back a year. But they have done little to affect the group's long-term potential.

The nursing home market has suffered from over-supply but occupancy levels are finally on the rise with demand rising sharply. Rising wage costs have kept margins in check but prospects are still encouraging.

Specialist health care analyst Laing & Buisson forecasts current-year profits of £16.5m, which should recover to £21m for the following 12 months putting the shares on a prospective p/e ratio of 15.

WHC's problems look like a glitch, albeit a rather substantial one. It may take some time for the company to drag itself out of the sick ward but in the long term the shares do not look expensive.

Scottish Radio sounds healthy

HOW LONG can the radio boom last? In the past few years, commercial radio operators and their shareholders

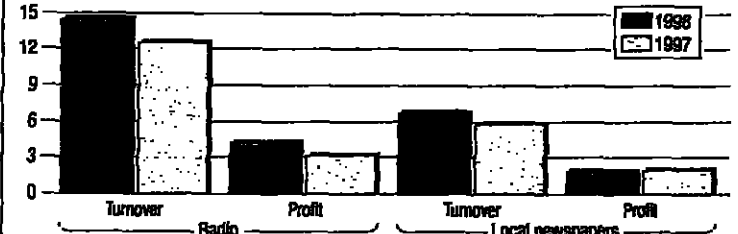
Scottish Radio: At a glance

Market value: £139.2m, share price 499p (+10p)

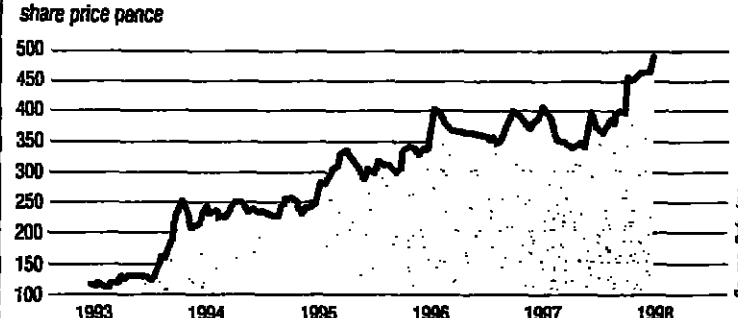
	12 months to 30 September			6 months to 31 March	
Trading record	1995	1996	1997	1997	1998
Turnover (£m)	17.1	28.4	37.4	18.3	21.3
Pre-tax profits (£m)	5.1	7.0	9.3	4.5	5.8
Earnings per share (p)	15.0	18.7	23.0	10.8	14.2
Dividends per share (p)	6.5	7.8	9.9	3.0	3.6

Divisional breakdown

6 months to March, £m



Scottish Radio share price



have enjoyed the best of all worlds. First, radio's share of the total advertising spend has grown from next to nothing to about 5 per cent as advertisers have switched away from more expensive media. Second, industry consolidation has yielded huge cost savings. Finally, general advertising spending has also been rising.

Clearly, this pace of growth cannot last. Commercial radio's share of listeners is unlikely to rise much further, so advertising growth is likely to slow. Room for further consolidation is limited. Scottish Radio's profits are highly geared to advertising. Interim results, released yesterday, showed operating profits rising by a third to £6m on sales up 16 per cent to £21.3m. Of that, only a few percentage points were the result of acquisitions.

The encouraging factor, however, was that growth on the radio side was matched by rising profits in its local newspaper operations, where Scottish Radio has recently been acquiring and integrating new titles.

This shows that the company is more than just a radio operator - its skills in understanding and exploiting local markets extend to other media. As a result, it is no surprise that Richard Findlay, chief executive, will not rule out moves into other media, though he is reluctant to say which ones he might be eyeing up.

Strong cashflow means that Scottish Radio now has a £5.6m cash pile with which to pursue acquisitions. The only problem is that Mr Findlay refuses to pay the inflated prices for which radio stations are now changing hands. Competition for deals in local newspapers is also becoming more intense.

That said, Mr Findlay still thinks advertising growth will be in the "low teens" this year, suggesting healthy profit growth. A bid from a larger media

group also remains a possibility. On a forward earnings multiple of about 18 the shares, up 10p to 499p yesterday, fully deserve their current rating.

Emu is the key for Bank of Ireland

WOULD-BE investors in the Bank of Ireland (BoI) should try and answer the \$64,000 question: will Economic and Monetary Union (Emu) be a success?

The healthy state of the Irish economy has been an important factor in BoI's recent success. A combination of low Irish inflation and strong growth rate helped the group make pre-tax profits of IR£530.4m (£461.2m) for the year to March, a jump of 34.1 per cent. The dividend rose by 30 per cent to IR£23.0p a share.

Two weeks ago, Ireland was formally given the green light to join the first wave of Emu. The BoI, unsurprisingly, is upbeat about the introduction of the euro, stressing the enhanced opportunities for inward investment. But Irish interest rates are currently above most European rates. Given that a common rate must apply across all participating states from 1 January, Irish rates will have to come down. This could destabilise a hitherto healthy economy and erode margins in the mortgage market.

However, it is unfair to attribute the entirety of the BoI's profit growth to the healthy Irish economy - only around half of the bank's profits flow from the Irish Republic.

Bristol & West (B&W), the UK building society which became part of the Irish group in July, was another driver of profit growth. B&W brought in profits of IR£92.3m last year, and continues to thrive in a competitive UK mortgage market.

Maurice Keane, BoI's chief executive, is not averse to an acquisition or two - possibly another UK building society - and corporate activity of this type should give BoI's shares an added boost. The shares closed yesterday down 34p at 1258p in London and down IR40p at IR14.50p in Dublin after a bout of profit taking.

Brokers' forecasts, upgraded slightly in the light of yesterday's figures, put the bank on a forward p/e of around 18, pretty standard for this type of stock. At first glance, this makes BoI look good value, given the solid across-the-board growth in its businesses. But when you factor in the uncertainties that Emu will bring, the shares seem fairly priced.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

CLIFFORD GERMAN



WHILE Ken Livingstone, Jeffrey Archer and half a dozen other potential candidates for the post of first ever Mayor of Greater London are still kicking their heels waiting for the election, the 67th Lord Mayor of London City, Alderman Richard Nichol, is off to Spain and Portugal this week-end for a fortnight of flag-waving on behalf of the City, emphasising its determination to remain the financial capital of Europe, whether or not we actually use the new European currency.

Next Tuesday the Lord Mayor meets the King Juan Carlos, his opposite number Alberto Ruiz, the president of the Madrid Regional Government, the economic secretary Cristobal Montoro and the president of the Madrid Stock exchange, Antonio Zoido, and opens a seminar where John Townend, the deputy director of market operations at the Bank of England, will speak on the theme "UK Government Policy: London Ready for the Euro." The following week it is off to Oporto for the opening of Expo 98, then on to Lisbon to address a seminar on one of his special interests, maritime law, entitled "The oceans: Law, security and Pollution."

THE AUTHENTIC sound of rolling stones will be heard in Hay's Galleria next month when 32 City companies are expected to compete for the 1998 Petanque Challenge sponsored by Cotes du Rhone wines. The winners will be awarded an inscribed trophy, and a day of strenuous activities including white-water rafting and rally driving as well as magnums and bottles of Cote du Rhone.

CONGRATULATIONS are in order for James Dubois, chairman of Gainsborough, an Oxford-listed company which provides short-term serviced office accommodation complete with receptionists and all the paraphernalia of a modern electronic office for companies wishing to test the water in a new location without going to the expense of renting and equipping space on a long-term lease. Last week Gainsborough opened its first location in the City at 33 Throgmorton Street, opposite the Stock Exchange, and next week its first

client, Real World Education, will move in, using office space to provide training on Microsoft office systems.

Meanwhile Hot Air, an all-male quartet in which James sings bass, has just won its first major booking to appear at the Claremont Fete Champetre, a kind of al-fresco Glyndebourne-style event near Esher, complete with dinner, musical entertainment and fireworks, in aid of the National Trust each evening from July 15 to 19. Lead singer is Norman Lilly, who sells vitamins for a living, Bob Jury, an internet consultant sings tenor, and Neil Barton, another computer expert, is the baritone. Their repertoire ranges from Gilbert & Sullivan to "Ol Man River" and "the Whiffenpoof Song". We wish them all a run of fine, mosquito-free nights.

FOOTBALL clubs don't just employ footballers these days of course. Without the extra financial resources needed to buy good players and pay their wages, even the most dedicated of teams are doomed to fail, as Barnsley, Bolton and Crystal Palace know to their cost. All three clubs won promotion to the Premier League a year ago; all three are heading back down again next season because they lacked the cash to compete.

In an attempt to avoid a similar fate, Nottingham Forest plc yesterday moved to consolidate winning promotion by hiring Zone, a firm of specialist merchandising consultants to boost their outside income. Last year Zone recruited Edward Freedman, a former managing director of Manchester United Merchandising, which increased its annual turnover from £2.7m to £28.7m over the last five years.

He tells me his remit is to provide Forest with a "positive brand image", not just to sell more kit to long-suffering supporters and their kids. Possible ideas include a new fanzine and a club museum, which might just possibly bear the name of Brian Clough, the club's most controversial character in recent years.

CHARLES SCOTT, who has run Cordiant, the advertising agency formerly known as Saatchi & Saatchi, since the soap-opera bust-up three years ago which saw the eponymous brothers expelled from the business they founded and set up elsewhere, has joined the board of TBI, the airports and property group, as a non-executive director. I gather he has been head-hunted to help the group develop its airport management business, especially in the US, and complete the shift away from its roots in the property business.

BRIAN TORA, marketing director at private client stockbrokers Greig Middleton (and a columnist for "Your Money", our personal finance section on Saturdays), tells me of a dramatic day at the races at Huntingdon, in the heart of John Majorland this week. Greig Middleton sponsored the Ladies Open Championship for the second successive year. The favourite fell, the second favourite ridden its rider and an outsider, Boxing Match, unseated by Vicki Roberts came through to win. She also drove the horse to the meeting and collected the prize on behalf of the trainer and the owner.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month	Dollar	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	10000	25891	25891	0.6938	0.6938	0.6938	0.6938
Australia	22565	22565	22565	1.5527	1.5527	1.5527	1.5527
Canada	20441	20441	20441	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537
Denmark	22565	22565	22565	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537
France	16757	16757	16757	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537
Germany	22565	22565	22565	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537
Italy	22565	22565	22565	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537
Japan	22565	22565	22565	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537
Netherlands	22565	22565	22565	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537
Spain	22565	22565	22565	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537
Sweden	22565	22565	22565	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537
Switzerland	22565	22565	22565	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537	1.2537
US	18505	24028	25795	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	16305	10000	Denmark	0.6938	0.6938
Brazil	15891	10000	France	0.6938	0.6938
Canada	12537	10000	Germany	0.6938	0.6938
Czech Rep	32291	10000	Italy	0.6938	0.6938
Egypt	32291	10000	Japan	0.6938	0.6938
Hong Kong	32291	10000	Netherlands	0.6938	0.6938
Hungary	32291	10000	Spain	0.6938	0.6938
India	68052	10000	Sweden	0.6938	0.6938
Indonesia	170763	10000	Switzerland	0.6938	0.6938
Kuwait	68052	10000	US	1.0000	1.0000
Nigeria	13722	10000			

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	7.25%	Germany	5.50%	US	5.50%
France	5.50%	Italy	5.50%	Japan	5.50%
Canada	5.50%	Spain	5.50%	Sweden	5.50%
Denmark	5.50%	Switzerland	5.50%		

Bond Yields

Country	3m	1y	5y	10y	30y
UK	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
Germany	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
France	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
Italy	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
Japan	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
US	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85

Money Market Rates

Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
Germany	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
France	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
Italy	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
Japan	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
US	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Open	Close
Long Call	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Short Call	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Long Put	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Short Put	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

Life FTSE 100 Index Option

Series	Call	Put	Call	Put
1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
2000	1000	1000	1000	1000
3000	1000	1000	1000	1000
4000	1000	1000	1000	1000

Commodity Indices

Index	Value	Index	Value	Index	Value
Oil	1000	Gold	1000	Silver	1000
Wheat	1000	Copper	1000	Aluminum	1000
Iron Ore	1000	Nickel	1000	Zinc	1000

Industrial Metals

Metal	Price	Metal	Price	Metal	Price
Aluminum	1000	Copper	1000	Gold	1000
Iron Ore	1000	Nickel	1000	Silver	1000
Lead	1000	Platinum	1000	Palladium	1000
Steel	1000	Rhodium	1000	Rosin	1000

Precious Metals

Metal	Price	Metal	Price	Metal	Price
Gold	1000	Silver	1000	Platinum	1000
Palladium	1000	Rhodium	1000	Rosin	1000
Steel	1000	Lead	1000	Aluminum	1000
Copper	1000	Nickel	1000	Zinc	1000

Agricultural

Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price
Wheat	1000	Corn	1000	Soybeans	1000
Oilseeds	1000	Grains	1000	Meats	1000
Dairy	1000	Eggs	1000	Other	1000

Other Softs

Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price
Softs	1000	Softs	1000	Softs	1000
Softs	1000	Softs	1000	Softs	1000
Softs	1000	Softs	1000	Softs	1000

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Fund	Price	Fund	Price	Fund	Price
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	1000	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	1000	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	1000
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	1000	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	1000	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	1000
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	1000	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	1000	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	1000
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	1000	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	1000	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	1000

Money Market Rates

Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
Germany	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
France	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
Italy	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
Japan	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85
US	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Open	Close
Long Call	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Short Call	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Long Put	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Short Put	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

Life FTSE 100 Index Option

Series	Call	Put	Call	Put
1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
2000	1000	1000	1000	1000
3000	1000	1000	1000	1000
4000	1000	1000	1000	1000

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INTERNET

Chelsea look to avoid pitfalls of past success

CHELSEA jetted into the island of Martinique last night with nothing to declare but Gianfranco Zola's genius and a new item of silverware. The Cup-Winners' Cup triumph over VfB Stuttgart in Stockholm stirred blue remembered thrills of when they won the same competition in 1971. The task facing Gianluca Vialli, once his team's Caribbean holiday is over, is to ensure that the similarities end there.

Twenty-seven years ago, following the defeat of Real Madrid in Athens, no one seriously questioned the Chelsea captain's greeting to the crowds who welcomed them back to Fulham Town Hall. "We're the kings of Europe now," Ron Harris exclaimed with all the subtlety which marked his tackling. Within four seasons, they were relegated.

Last the connection between the two events seems tenuous, it should be noted that the first conspicuous sign of things starting to fall apart came within months of Chelsea's victory in

the final. In their first serious defence of the trophy, against the Swedish part-timers at Arvidaberg, they were eliminated on away goals.

Chelsea's failure to build on an exceptional start to the Seventies was a complex affair, involving the construction of a stand they could not afford and a communication breakdown between a cerebral manager, Dave Sexton, and some of his more maverick players.

The events of last February, when Ruud Gullit was unexpectedly sacked by Ken Bates, suggest that the extent to which Vialli is allowed to manage in the manner he chooses may hold the key to avoiding similar strife this time.

Even Bates, the grumpy grey eminence of SW6, cannot quibble with Vialli's record as player-manager, albeit with personnel inherited from Gullit.

Chelsea, having won nothing but the Second Division title and the Full Members' Cup since the Sexton era, have al-

As Gianluca Vialli's team celebrate their European triumph, Phil Shaw still sees room for improvement at Stamford Bridge

ready added to March's Coca-Cola Cup win over Middlesbrough.

The Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* spoke of an "Engelsk fest" in the Rasunda Stadium. The headline must have referred to Chelsea's 16,000 followers, who pumped up the volume whenever their team appeared to be flagging, for in truth the Anglo-Saxon influence on the pitch was not pronounced.

Neither, happily, was it entirely absent. The captain, Dennis Wise, produced the marvellously incisive pass from which Zola struck his stunning winner within 20 seconds of appearing as a late substitute.

Yet whereas the side led by Harris contained only three players not born in England, the only Englishman among the 12 involved against Stuttgart were

Wise, Michael Duberry and Danny Granville.

It is anomalous, incidentally, that Glenn Hoddle (whose sojourn as Chelsea manager suddenly seems a long time ago) has overlooked the admittedly waspish Wise in his World Cup plans in favour of more prosaic midfield operators.

Wednesday's euphoria would appear to represent a resounding vindication of Chelsea's policy of buying abroad. However, for every foreign recruit that has adapted to the rigours of the domestic slog, like Zola, Frank Leboeuf and Gustavo Poyet, there is another who has not.

Celestine Babayaro, Laurent Charvet and Bernard Lambeur have proved nothing so far other than that Gullit's knowledge of the French scene

was inferior to Arsène Wenger's.

As a consequence, the strength available to Vialli has not run sufficiently deep to paper over the cracks whenever match-winners such as Zola have been injured. One of the challenges confronting Vialli must be to prevent Chelsea becoming simply a collection of cup showmen, raising their game in one-off matches but without the resilience to push for the championship.

Gullit would be entitled to point out that his team, rather than Arsenal, carried the main threat to Manchester United at the time of his demise.

The final Premiership table reveals that despite finishing fourth, Chelsea lost no fewer than 15 games, most of the defeats occurring since the change of management.

It may also seem inevitable to criticise players who have kept a clean sheet in a major final, especially on a pitch of which many of both sides were transparently suspicious. But there

were enough fraught moments in front of Ed De Goey to suggest that the first area which Vialli should address is his defence. The partnership of Leboeuf and Duberry is error-prone, while Steve Clarke, who has been at Stamford Bridge longer than anyone except Bates, has passed his peak.

There is also a case to be made for additions to the strikers' department if Chelsea are to graduate from being pretenders to contenders in the League. Mark Hughes has received a renewed lease of life because of the squad-rotation system introduced by Gullit, but in his 35th year he is understandably most effective when playing in short bursts.

Vialli, too, reaches 34 during the close season and Zola will be 32 by the time Chelsea report back to training. Michael Laudrup, whose transfer from Rangers is in the balance after a dispute between the clubs, could well be the first of many high-profile recruits should the deal go through.



Zola: The Cup-Winners' Cup-winner Photograph: Reuters

In the meantime, as they reflect on a campaign of great achievement on their beach, Vialli's men also have a trip to Monte Carlo to contemplate.

They will contest the European Super Cup against Real Madrid or Juventus on Monaco's ground in August.

Their efforts also had a knock-on effect for Aston Villa, whose once-desperate season has ended in qualification for

the UEFA Cup thanks to the London club.

The ripples of Chelsea's satisfaction have even reached Highbury in the form of a positive augury on the eve of the FA Cup final. For it was in that heady spring of '71, when all the main prizes except the European Cup and the UEFA Cup last came to London - as might well happen again this year - that Arsenal won the Double.

Day when courage was not enough

ADDRESSING the men he was about to lead against Newcastle United in the 1952 FA Cup final, by then in his 38th year, Joe Mercer declared, "Don't forget - nobody starts favourites against Arsenal."

If stirred by their captain's call to arms, the horse players in Arsenal's line-up were not inclined to disagree with the odds that had been laid against them.

Mercer was taking out a team stricken by illness and injuries. Welsh international Ray Daniel wore a protective covering over the plaster cast that encased a broken wrist; Jimmy Logie, his right thigh strapped could barely conceal a limp; Doug Lishman, like Logie, not long out of hospital had completely shaken off the effects of blood poisoning. Cliff Holton, the only fully-fit centre-forward available to Arsenal's manager, Tom Whittaker, was turning out in his first FA Cup tie.

Speaking last week from Johannesburg, his home for more than 30 years, Alex Forbes, the Scottish international who was at right-half for Arsenal said, "Things got so bad I imagined us turning up at Wembley in an ambulance. Even Arsenal fans among the gamblers I mixed with in those days were betting against us."

Arsenal's troubles began after defeating Chelsea in a replayed semi-final to set up a possible championship and Cup double 19 years before their north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur became the first club to achieve it this century.

Playing three games in four days over Easter (in those days a feature of the League programme) Arsenal were left counting their wounded. First Daniel, who broke a wrist in collision with Stan Mortensen at Blackpool on Good Friday, At Bolton, the following day, Daniel's veteran deputy, Leslie Compton, pulled a muscle.

Forty-eight hours later (and the present crop of players complain of strain) Logie was badly hurt against Newcastle at Highbury when Arsenal also lost Arthur Shaw, their third-centre-half in successive matches.

Tomorrow Wembley stages a repeat of the 1952 Cup final. Ken Jones talks to one of the losing side from 46 years ago

A 3-1 defeat at West Bromwich with five reserves in the team left Arsenal with the task of winning 7-0 at Old Trafford to gain the League title ahead of Manchester United.

Whittaker conceded in a telegram to Matt Busby - "All at Arsenal send sincere congratulations on a worthy championship success."

In an autobiography *Tom Whittaker's Arsenal Story* published shortly before his death in 1956, Whittaker went over the trials that quickly followed. "Up in Newcastle my rival manager and old friend, Stan Seymour, in a radio interview, was saying: 'All these stories about injuries from Highbury may be just a trick by Tom Whittaker to put us off our guard.' Oh Stan, if you only knew what went on at Highbury in those desperate and disappointing weeks."

Forty-six years on, Forbes, now 73 and together with goalkeeper George Swindin and outside-left Don Roper one of three members of the 1952 team still living, recalls fear of an epidemic in the dressing-room. "When Jimmy [Logie] followed Doug Lishman into hospital we were supposed to be the best."

Whittaker, formerly the club's physiotherapist, ordered all equipment to be removed and sterilised. Training refuse was immediately burned. "One joke was that a sign should be painted on the dressing-room doors to show where the dead could be picked up but the seriousness of the situation didn't escape us," Forbes recalled.

Bought from Sheffield United for £12,000 in 1948 after making five of 14 appearances in Scotland's colours, Forbes was both skilful and hard, his balance a reminder that he could have made a name in ice hockey. A key figure when Arsenal de-

feated Liverpool 2-0 to win the FA Cup two years earlier he approached the 1952 final worrying about his great pal Logie.

It isn't the benefit of hindsight that persuades Forbes to think that Logie should not have been sent out against Newcastle. "He was a sick man, really sick. There was a hole in his leg where the poison had been drained and by rights he should have still been in hospital. I'm sure it couldn't happen today but things then were a lot different. There was only the championship and the Cup to play for and without Jimmy, who was a brilliant inside-forward, we had no chance of beating Newcastle."

One night in the sweet long ago Forbes told of Logie's disappearance from Arsenal's dressing-room at Wembley before the 1950 final. "We were out of the tunnel and almost onto the pitch when he trotted out," Forbes recalled. "When we lined up for the presentations I heard his voice. 'Alex,' he shouted, 'it got beat, Alex.' We'd backed a dog in the 2-30 and Jimmy had soaked into the ambulance room to get the result. The wee man was nervous but in 1952 I wept for him."

Arsenal's run of bad luck (hundreds of suggestions including lucky charms and potions had been received at Highbury) continued into the final. After only 18 minutes Wally Barnes was crippled when attempting to block Jackie Milburn. With Roper moving to right-back the Welshman limped on to the wing, but it was soon obvious that he could not continue, leaving Arsenal (no substitutes then) a man short for the time that remained.

It became known as one of their finest hours. Daniel carried on bravely despite a fall that again broke the party knitted bone in his wrist. But, in truth, Arsenal were down to nine men. "By then Jimmy [Logie] was knackered," Forbes re-



Alex Forbes (left) tangles with Robert Mitchell at Wembley Photograph: Hulton Getty

called. "He could hardly stand up and was sent to play on the right wing."

With just 20 minutes left, Newcastle's manager, Seymour, grew restive. Turning to Reg Davies, a young Welsh inside-forward and future international recently signed from Southend United, he said, "This isn't good enough. If it isn't settled today you'll be selected for the replay."

The words were hardly out of Seymour's mouth when Arsenal almost went ahead. "I think if Lishman's header had gone in instead of bouncing off the bar we would have pulled off the impossible," Forbes said. "As the ball went over I saw Jimmy's shoulders slump as he trudged wearily back to touch-line."

When George Robledo ended Arsenal's gallant resistance with a header that went in off the inside of an upright Forbes

was on the floor. "Because I already had a Cup winner's medal, losing didn't seem so bad and I was relieved that there wouldn't be extra time. Then I felt a tug at my collar. It was Joe Mercer pulling me up, shouting that we could still save the match."

When it was over, Seymour stood to shake Whittaker's hand. "Tom, ours is the cup," he said. "Yours the honour and the glory."

Walker at Wembley again

Non-League notebook
By Rupert Metcalf

CLIVE WALKER, the former Chelsea and Woking forward who now turns out for Cheltenham Town, is not used to being marked by a defender older than himself. That is what may lie in wait for him, though, if he is selected for Sunday's FA Umbro Trophy final.

Although the Gloucestershire club can field two other strikers, Dale Watkins and Jason Eaton, who have hit 33 goals between them this term, Walker will surely play some part against Southport. The 40-year-old - he turns 41 later this month - has become a Trophy specialist, having collected winners' medals with Woking in 1994, '95 and '97.

In contrast, Southport's

player-manager, Paul Fletcher, who will be 42 in September, will be making his debut at the national stadium. In a distinguished Football League career which began with Chester 26 years ago, the stylish central defender never reached Wembley.

Sunday will also be a first appearance there for both clubs. "To be the manager that takes this club to Wembley for the first time in their 117-year history makes it very special," Fletcher said. "And to have the chance at 41 to turn out at Wembley, when I thought the opportunity had passed me by, is something beyond my wildest dreams."

In charge at Cheltenham is Steve Cotterill who, at 33, is believed to be the youngest manager to lead out a team at a senior Wembley final. His side are the bookmakers' favourites for the Trophy, thanks largely to a closing run of six wins

(including two against Southport) in eight games which saw them finish in second place behind Halifax Town in the GM Vauxhall Conference.

Southport, however, lost seven of their last eight matches and ended up in 16th place. The Lancashire club will also have less support on Sunday: they have sold about 8,000 tickets while Cheltenham have got rid of around twice that number.

The Conference will reveal its plans for a new two-tier structure next week. Subject to ratification at next month's annual general meeting, it will start the 1999-2000 season with a second division of 22 clubs - a development which would have a dramatic impact on its three feeder leagues. Bill King, the Conference chairman, said: "Our proposed revision is about clubs and fans, not the tradition of [other] competitions."

Fulham's future looks bright

By Adam Szreter

FULHAM have made almost as many enemies as new admirers since Mohammed Al Fayed turned his considerable financial attention towards a famous old club languishing near the bottom of the Nationwide League. But despite failure to reach the Second Division promotion play-off final this week, a disappointment that followed shortly after the abrupt dismissal of Ray Wilkins as team manager, it would still be hard to find a genuine Fulham supporter wishing to turn the clock back.

Their 28th team is the envy of every other club in their division, and a good many others besides, but Al Fayed is not the first of English football's new generation of mega-rich proprietors to discover that money does not buy you instant success. Ironically, it was the sending-off of one of

their more expensive acquisitions, Paul Peschisolidi, that did much to undermine Fulham's hopes in the play-off semi-final second leg at Grimsby on Wednesday.

They came close but, as Kevin Keegan, their erstwhile chief operations manager and now team manager, said after the 1-0 defeat that consigned Fulham to at least another year in the Second Division: "My job is to make sure we get into the Premiership within four years now. We're a bit short of time but it'll make it more exciting."

Judging by the comments flowing into The Fulham Independent website yesterday that is exactly how it is seen by the majority of their fans, both old and new. Little more than two years after struggling near the foot of the Third Division, recent attendance records are being broken at Craven Cottage and with players like Peschisolidi

and Chris Coleman alongside the more experienced Paul Bracewell and Peter Beardsley the future looks bright.

Whether Keegan will be a part of that future, and in what role, remains to be seen. It is believed he will appoint a new manager in the summer and revert to his previous job, but if he found it difficult keeping his nose out of Wilkins' business then he will have to choose his man carefully or take it on himself.

Al Fayed's money has already produced miracles in SW6, and more critical to Fulham's future than Keegan of course is Al Fayed himself. Unlike the Jack Walkers and Jack Hayward, Al Fayed has no deep-rooted attachment to his club and could pull the plug at any time. In the meantime, though, as Keegan said after the game on Wednesday, "Maybe Fulham FC started here tonight."

Justice for Charlton and Sunderland

JUSTICE was done in the First Division play-offs on Wednesday night as the sides who finished third and fourth in the table - Sunderland and Charlton - booked their places in the Wembley final on 25 May.

Sunderland, who just missed out on automatic promotion, sealed their trip to Wembley with a 2-0 win over sixth-placed Sheffield United, while Charlton beat fifth-placed Ipswich 1-0.

Sunderland had to claw back a 2-1 deficit from the first leg and it was unfortunate that the United defender Nicky Markewicz drew them level by diverting Allan Johnston's 20-yard effort into his own net in the 22nd minute.

Top scorer Kevin Phillips then gave Sunderland a deserved lead in the 38th minute with his 34th goal of the season - which equals Brian Clough's post-war record.

Sunderland continued to bombard United's goal in the first half, but after the break Lionel Perez pulled off three sensational saves to deny United the vital goal in front of 40,092 at the Stadium of Light. Shaun Newton secured Charlton's place in the final by wrapping up a 2-0 aggregate victory at The Valley. Charlton held a 1-0 advantage from the first leg and Newton's 36th-minute effort clinched Charl-

ton's first Wembley appearance for 11 years.

Northampton staged the comeback of the play-offs in the Second Division after trailing 3-1 to Bristol Rovers in the first leg. Carl Hegg, returning after a four-match suspension, fired them into a 34th-minute lead and Ian Clarkson drew the Cobblers level on 61 minutes.

Ray Warburton sealed a 3-0 second-leg success and 4-3 aggregate triumph in the 77th minute. Northampton will now meet Grimsby at Wembley on 24 May for a First Division place next season.

Grimsby, who finished third in the Second Division and won the Auto Windscreens Shield at Wembley last month, had Kevin Donovan to thank for their second trip to the twin towers this season.

He struck nine minutes from time against Fulham to clinch a 2-1 aggregate win, after Kevin Keegan's men had had Paul Peschisolidi sent off after half an hour.

In the Third Division, Torquay stormed to Wembley with a 4-1 second-leg win and 7-2 aggregate victory over Scarborough, who had two players sent off. Torquay will meet Colchester in the final on May 22, although Colchester needed extra time to beat 10-man Barnet who had held a 1-0 advantage from the first leg.

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Dance swings into Derby rhythm

By Richard Edmondson

DURING his long subbatical from the race track Walter Swinburn was sustained by the thought of afternoons like yesterday's on the Knavesmire.

It took a year in the sidings for the Choirboy to correct his fluctuating weight and regain focus for riding. Now it may require just another two and a half minutes for the jockey to establish himself at his profession's pinnacle in three weeks' time.

In winning yesterday's Glasgow Stakes Swinburn's mount Greek Dance established himself as favourite for the Derby in one book. Shergar, Shahrastani and Lamarrta may have to squeeze up in the rider's seat to make space for yet another Blue Riband winner.

Greek Dance's is no fleeting comet of ability at Michael Stoute's Newmarket yard. He has impressed from the first morning of term with both his ability and attitude. "I liked him from day one, everyone did," Swinburn said. "We were all very excited leading up to Newmarket [where the colt made a winning seasonal debut] and we couldn't have asked for any more from him there."

"He just seems to have everything that goes with a good racehorse, including the temperament. Even though he put daylight between him and the others today it felt to me that he was just doing enough in front. I believe there could be the same sort of progression again."

"I was delighted with the way he could change pace and po-

sition for me two or three times during the race because that will stand him in good stead for Epsom. He's very manoeuvrable and I don't think ground represents a problem because he's been on the heavy at home and good, fast ground here. I'm excited."

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Power Bigwig
(Thurs 4.25)
NB: Random Kindness
(Newbury 3.10)

Greek Dance has yet to utilise his gearbox fully this season. He moved smoothly throughout yesterday, his short tail wagging behind him, and then made his market rival Capri look rather leader in the closing stages. Six lengths was the winning margin and Lad-

brokes' immediate reaction was to go 4-1 for the Derby.

Stoute himself did not dissuade investors. "He went to Newmarket a little short of work because the ground had been bad and we'd been conservative with him, and although the form didn't work out well, what pleased me was the way he travelled that day," he said. "He's a bit fitter now and I loved the way he travelled again. This horse would have to be seriously considered [for the Derby] after today."

Earlier, Busy Flight had broken ranks from a conga formation for the Yorkshire Cup to suggest he might be the leading stayer for this campaign. In stalmant No 2 comes in the Ascot Gold Cup next month.

As the five-year-old responded compliantly for

Michael Hills up the Knavesmire straight it was hard to imagine that this was once the most unyielding of horses. When they were teaching this youngster tricks, Busy Flight was very good at the swift fetch, but could not master a steeple.

After years of tuition, however, the horse now settles like a tabby on a plump cushion. "It's been a hard job because he's a very strong horse," Hills said. "I've had my battles and my arms are now three inches longer."

THE DERBY (Epsom, 6 June): Cont 8-4 (with a run) Cape Verde, 8-1 City Honours & Saratoga Springs, 7-1 Border Arrow, 6-1 Delfino, 5-1 Delfino, 4-1 Delfino, 3-1 Delfino, 2-1 Delfino, 1-1 Delfino.

HYPERION'S TV TIPS

NEWBURY

2.40: GORSE missed last season with a stress fracture in a fetlock but began making up for lost time by showing fine pace to win at Salisbury on his debut. Henry Candy has a good strike-rate in the sprinters and this colt can cope with today's step up in grade. Jimmy Tones has travelled a long way and looks a threat.

3.10: PAFUA failed to get his head in front last year but was golden in the autumn and that could mean him regaining the winning thread from a lenient handicap mark. Grief, with a talented claimer in the saddle, may well trouble the selection.

3.40: JTB is highly strung but should be given a chance to redeem her fall reputation following a disappointing eighth of 16 runners in the 1,000 Guineas.

Results, page 31

McCoy hits 250

TONY MCCOY moved past the 250 mark for the season with a double at Perth yesterday. The champion, however, starts a five-day ban on Sunday.

Newbury 3.10									
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Weight	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Trainer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Thirsk									
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Weight	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Trainer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

HYPERION									
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Weight	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Trainer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

HYPERION									
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Weight	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Trainer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

HYPERION									
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Weight	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Trainer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Nottingham

2.30 Esperto 3.00 Republic 3.35 Potly Goghly 4.05 Sadler's Blaze 4.35 Wild Pail 5.10 Sweet Dreams

GOING: Good to Firm (Good in places).
DRAW ADVANTAGE: None.
LEADING TRAINERS: J. Durrant 2-12 (72%), J. Panshove 9-28 (68%), M. Channon 5-76 (10%), R. Hollinhead 5-22 (72%).
LEADING JOCKEYS: T. Spence 17-100 (12%), D. Duffield 15-78 (15%), M. Hills 12-62 (84%), M. Roberts 9-25 (10%).
FAVOURITES: 228-664 (34%).
BLINKERED AT TIME: Hobart Junction (435), Arzani (incurred, 228).

4.05 SAKONDALE HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Weight	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Trainer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

4.35 GOTHAM LIMITED STAKES (CLASS F) £3,000 added 1m

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Weight	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Trainer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

4.25 49'S DICK PEACOCK SPRINT HANDICAP (CLASS C) £10,000 added 1m

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Weight	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Trainer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

4.50 GORDON FOSTER MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,000 added 1m

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Weight	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Trainer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

5.00 HELMSLEY HANDICAP (CLASS C) £7,800 added 2m

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Weight	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Trainer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

3.00 WOODTHORPE AUCTION STAKES (CLASS E) £3,800 added 2YO 6f

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Weight	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Trainer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

3.35 BULWELL HANDICAP (CLASS E) £3,800 added 5f

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Weight	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Trainer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

5.10 STRELLY HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,500 added 3YO 1m

ESS (183) B R Milman 887 . . . T Sprake 2
JAZE (17) (C) P Harris 485 . . . G Duffield 5 V
(234) P Cde 485 . . . A Whelan 8
(C) M Britan 883 . . . G Carter 9 B
ANE (6) (D) G Fiero 677 . . . Rhamill 3
(D) D Murray Smith 47 n . . . S Maloney 1
88 47 n . . . R Brieland 7 (4)

Chicago weights: Brynkirk 1st 8th, Shiny 7th 3rd.
4-1 Bowellite Court, 9-2 Paradise Home, 13-
Sloane, Brynkirk, 8-1 Amarge, 12 others

LIMITED STAKES (CLASS F)
Added 1m

D (73) Pat Mitchell 599 . . . R Studholme 7 (4)

Sampras surprised by Chang

Tennis

By John Roberts
in Rome

PIETRE SAMPRAS won the Italian Open title before the "Ark", which is not as long ago as it may seem, since the wooden Centre Court at the Foro Italico was completed in 1996, two years after the world No 1's impressive triumph on clay. Yesterday, however, Sampras's largely disappointing experiences on the sport's slowest surface found a new dimension when he was out-served by Michael Chang, 11 aces to five.

The day's other surprise was sprung by Brett Steven, a 29-year-old New Zealand journeyman, who defeated Spain's Carlos Moya, the Monte Carlo Open champion, 7-5, 6-0. "I don't think anybody in their right mind would have taken me to win," Steven said after advancing to the quarter-finals.

Although many observers would have fancied the counter-punching Chang's prospects against his American compatriot, the serve is hardly his biggest weapon. Chang has, of course, achieved the one hon-

our denied to his opponent, winning the French Open back in 1989 and dispatching Sampras, 6-1, 6-1, 6-1, in the second round in the process.

That was a victory for Chang's prodigious guile over Sampras's intent talent that would secure him the United States Open in 1990 and nine other Grand Slam titles thereafter, four of them at Wimbledon.

They had not met on a clay court since then, Sampras winning 11 of their 17 matches in the interim. Solidly though Chang served yesterday in making up some of the ground lost earlier in the season because of a knee injury, his win, 6-2, 7-6, was crafted by greater confidence in his rallying skills allied to his opponent's distrust of the way the balls behaved for him. Sampras's 37 unforced errors to Chang's 13 represent the more accurate tale of events.

Sampras, in common with Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov, who double-faulted on match point in losing to the Dutchman Richard Krajicek, numbers among the players who have complained about the speed of the balls here. But to suggest that the fast balls favoured



Roman showdown: Michael Chang hits a backhand during his win over his old rival Pete Sampras Photograph: Reuters

Chang's serve, as Sampras did yesterday, appears to defy logic. It was with his ground strokes that Sampras suffered most, rarely gauging the pace of his shots correctly, many of them finding the net, others flying long or wide.

He was broken in the opening game and again for 1-4, double-faulting on break point, in losing the first set in only 28 minutes. Although Sampras

improved during the second set, after saving three break points in the third game and another in the 11th - after successfully urging the crowd to support him instead of whistling at his errors - he was unable to build on a 2-0 lead in the tie-break, which Chang won, 8-6.

"Pete's style has never been one to beat players in long rallies, and clay has never been his best surface," Chang said. "Go-

ing for his shots forced him into errors. I just tried to mix it up and play smart tennis. I don't think I'll ever win matches just by serving well."

Steven, who recovered from 1-4 in the first set to "fluster" Moya, did so by changing his tactics and slicing short shots. "It's not attractive tennis, but it worked well," the New Zealander said. "I managed to keep him off balance, but if we meet again at the

French Open I'm sure he will know mentally how to play me."

Krajicek, the 1996 Wimbledon champion, edged Kafelnikov, the 1996 French Open winner, 6-2, 3-6, 7-6. Gustavo Kuerten, of Brazil, the reigning French champion, defeated the young German Tommy Haas, 6-4, 6-2, and Marcelo Rios, the Chilean world No 3, swept past Thomas Muster, the former "King of Clay", 6-3, 6-1.

'Lucky' Oliver insists he still loves his sport

Boxing

SPENCER OLIVER yesterday admitted he felt fortunate to be alive after suffering life-threatening injuries in a fight 12 days ago.

The former European bantamweight champion had emergency surgery to remove a blood clot from his brain following his 10th-round defeat by

Ukraine's Sergei Devakov at the Royal Albert Hall on 2 May. At first, it was feared Oliver - who was one of Britain's brightest prospects before the accident - would die, but he has made a remarkable recovery and was able to walk out of hospital on Wednesday.

The Londoner, who will never box again, revealed: "I feel a bit lucky at the moment, to tell the truth. I feel like I've got a

second bite of the cherry. I don't remember anything of the night at all. I can just remember waking up in the hospital and thinking: 'What am I doing here?' I just thought I'd been knocked out - I didn't think it was as serious as it was. They told me afterwards that I had a very slim chance of surviving. Before then they didn't have much hope for me. I'm just lucky that I'm alive."

Oliver's injuries have led to renewed calls from the medical profession for boxing to be banned. However, the 23-year-old said: "I think it's still got to carry on. There's too much money involved in boxing, and it's a great sport."

"What happened to me doesn't change my views of things. I still love the sport as much as I did before and as if I could do it all again, I'd do

it the same. I'd let my son be a boxer if he wanted to be, though I wouldn't force him into it because it's a tough sport."

The British welterweight champion Geoff McCreesh has been fined £5,000 by the Boxing Board of Control after testing positive for a banned substance following last November's European title defeat by Michele Piccirilli in Novara, Italy. McCreesh has lodged an appeal.

Howey makes quick advance to semi-finals

Judo

By Nicola Fairbrother

KATE HOWEY put herself half-way along the road to winning the European title yesterday when she won her first two contests at the European Championships in Oviedo and reached the semi-finals.

The first match was the marker of Howey's form with the Brit up against the Italian Ylenia Scapin, who has won their last three encounters. But yesterday, the Italian hardly got a look in. Howey started the contest with a series of her trademark pick ups and leg grabs. And although Scapin did come back in the third minute, Howey had already notched up enough attacks to deserve all the referees' flags.

A clean throw, on Cato Rodrigues of Portugal, followed to show that all bodies well for Saturday's semi-final when Howey will meet Karin Kienhuis from the Netherlands. But with four bronze medals and two silvers from previous years, Howey's not taking anything for granted.

"I'm really pleased to have beaten Scapin but on Saturday I will go in thinking it's my first fight again," she said. "It's then that the real business starts."

Also through to semi-final position are light heavyweight Chloe Cowen and the young heavyweight, Karina Bryant.

Skelton exploits early advantage

Equestrianism

Genevieve Murphy
in Windsor

NICK SKELTON believed it was an advantage to be drawn early when he won yesterday's Samsung Electronics Speed Stakes on the opening day of the Royal Windsor Horse Show. The ground was to become heavier during the contest, with the rain providing its usual unwelcome soaking at this long-established fixture in the Home Park.

Skelton won on Virtual Village Cartegone, one of the eight-year-old horses he is bringing on quietly for the big international shows of the future. At the moment, he has no thoughts of aiming his good youngsters for the World Equestrian Games to be held in Italy in October.

Yesterday Skelton defeated 23-year-old Andrew Davies on Captain Wellington and the New Zealander, Samantha McIntosh, on Ricarda. Davies, who is making a name for himself on the home circuit, is trained by David Broome.

Tim Stockdale, temporarily out of action with a broken knee after being kicked by a horse, was at Windsor for the announcement of a new sponsorship deal. Transdata, who make CD equipment, are injecting £1m into show jumping this year. This includes support for three riders - Stockdale, Ireland's former European champion, Peter Charles, and an up-and-coming rider, Stuart Harvey.

The riders have been given a three-year contract, which takes them up to the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, which is the goal for both Stockdale and Charles.

Wind turns race into lottery

Sailing

By Stuart Alexander
in La Rochelle

NERVES were becoming frayed on the Whitbread race track last night as the final stages of the eighth leg from Annapolis to La Rochelle turned

into a lottery. At the front, Paul Standbridge in Toshiba and Lawrie Smith in Britain's Silk Cut watching anxiously as the fickle wind caused all sorts of problems.

For the previous leader, Grant Dalton, it had been "a dark day on board as Merit Cup had watched overnight the

boats in the north hold [wind] pressure longer and sail away from us."

No one could say with certainty who would be first into a French town eagerly awaiting their arrival, or even when. Even more uncertain was how points would be allocated by the time all nine had finished.

Games could be health risk

Athletics

PAUL EVANS, the British marathon runner, believes the health of young athletes could be at risk if they take part in this summer's Commonwealth Games in Malaysia.

Evans claims pollution levels in Kuala Lumpur could be dangerous to young competitors who will still feel they cannot miss the opportunity to take part.

The 1996 Chicago Marathon champion says British athletics officials could be doing more to find out whether it is safe for people to take part in the Games.

Speaking at the launch of this year's Great South Run in Portsmouth, Evans said he would not hesitate to pull out if he felt the levels of toxins in the air would harm him. "The buck is being passed on to the athlete to make up their mind whether or not they want

to take part," he said. "We are being supplied with figures, but they don't mean too much to anyone."

"I'm in a position where I don't have to go if I feel my health would be at risk, but for athletes who are about 18 years old he would be very hard to drop out. They could be selected for their country for the first time and they would be so keen to run it would be difficult for them to pull out."

Sporting Digest

Athletics

The venue of the 2001 World Championships will be decided at the International Amateur Athletic Federation council meeting on November 23. Letters of intent to bid have been received from Edmonton, Canada; Moscow, Russia; Seoul, South Korea; and Sydney, Australia. The destination of the 2001 World Indoor Championships will also be decided.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Baltimore 9 Cleveland 6; Oakland 4 Toronto 3; New York Yankees 8 Tampa Bay 1; Minnesota 6 Chicago White Sox 3. NATIONAL LEAGUE: Montreal 9 San Francisco 6; Detroit 10 Atlanta 4; St Louis 5 Houston 1; Pittsburgh 6 Chicago Cubs 0; Colorado 3; Milwaukee 6 Arizona 3; Los Angeles 4 Philadelphia 3; New York Mets 4 San Diego 0.

Basketball

NBA PLAYOFFS: Second Round (best of seven series). Eastern Conference: Indiana 80 New York 66 (Indiana won series 4-0); Chicago 91 Charlotte 64 (Chicago won series 4-0).

Boxing

Larrok Lewis, the world heavyweight champion, is to become an advisor to the world amateur super-heavyweight champion, Glebovskiy Kandelaki, Kandelaki, a 23-year-old Russian, will be promoted by Frank Maloney and Pance Eladze, the men who steered Lewis to the WBC title. Kandelaki, who stands at 6ft 5in and weighs 165lb, will make his debut at Hull Arena on 9 June.

Equestrianism

ROYAL WINDSOR HORSE SHOW: Samsung Electronics Speed Stakes: Virtual Village Cartegone (N Skelton) 23.0; Captain Wellington (A Davies) 23.0; Ricarda (S McIntosh) 23.0. Rolex Rolex Rolex: 1. Nemo (G Luckett) 23.0; 2. Captain (A Davies) 23.0; 3. Nemo (G Luckett) 23.0. Rolex Rolex Rolex: 1. Nemo (G Luckett) 23.0; 2. Captain (A Davies) 23.0; 3. Nemo (G Luckett) 23.0.

Today's fixtures

FOOTBALL: AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION First Division: Luton v Tottenham (2.0). PREMIER LEAGUE: Arsenal v Manchester United (2.0). TOULON INTERNATIONAL UNDER-21 TOURNAMENT: Group B: Germany v China (2.0); Spain v Portugal (2.0) (both at Stade Mayol, Toulon).

Rugby League

LEAGUE: Super League: Leeds v Wigan (7.45). RUGBY LEAGUE First Division: Huddersfield v Wigan (7.45).

Rugby Union

WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE Premier Division: Ebbw Vale v Bridgend (7.45).

Speedway

PREMIER LEAGUE: Cup: Avon Essex v Newport (8.0); Edinburgh v Berwick (2.0); Isle of Wight v Dover (2.0); Peterborough v Reading (7.45).

Other sports

GOLF: BURNHAM: Royal Windsor Open (at The Old Course, Windsor).

Racing results

YORK

2.05: 1. HO LING (M J Kneen) 20.1; 2. Kyo 20.1; 3. Brave Heart 20.1; 4. Gold 20.1; 5. 19.9; 6. 19.9; 7. 19.9; 8. 19.9; 9. 19.9; 10. 19.9; 11. 19.9; 12. 19.9; 13. 19.9; 14. 19.9; 15. 19.9; 16. 19.9; 17. 19.9; 18. 19.9; 19. 19.9; 20. 19.9; 21. 19.9; 22. 19.9; 23. 19.9; 24. 19.9; 25. 19.9; 26. 19.9; 27. 19.9; 28. 19.9; 29. 19.9; 30. 19.9; 31. 19.9; 32. 19.9; 33. 19.9; 34. 19.9; 35. 19.9; 36. 19.9; 37. 19.9; 38. 19.9; 39. 19.9; 40. 19.9; 41. 19.9; 42. 19.9; 43. 19.9; 44. 19.9; 45. 19.9; 46. 19.9; 47. 19.9; 48. 19.9; 49. 19.9; 50. 19.9; 51. 19.9; 52. 19.9; 53. 19.9; 54. 19.9; 55. 19.9; 56. 19.9; 57. 19.9; 58. 19.9; 59. 19.9; 60. 19.9; 61. 19.9; 62. 19.9; 63. 19.9; 64. 19.9; 65. 19.9; 66. 19.9; 67. 19.9; 68. 19.9; 69. 19.9; 70. 19.9; 71. 19.9; 72. 19.9; 73. 19.9; 74. 19.9; 75. 19.9; 76. 19.9; 77. 19.9; 78. 19.9; 79. 19.9; 80. 19.9; 81. 19.9; 82. 19.9; 83. 19.9; 84. 19.9; 85. 19.9; 86. 19.9; 87. 19.9; 88. 19.9; 89. 19.9; 90. 19.9; 91. 19.9; 92. 19.9; 93. 19.9; 94. 19.9; 95. 19.9; 96. 19.9; 97. 19.9; 98. 19.9; 99. 19.9; 100. 19.9; 101. 19.9; 102. 19.9; 103. 19.9; 104. 19.9; 105. 19.9; 106. 19.9; 107. 19.9; 108. 19.9; 109. 19.9; 110. 19.9; 111. 19.9; 112. 19.9; 113. 19.9; 114. 19.9; 115. 19.9; 116. 19.9; 117. 19.9; 118. 19.9; 119. 19.9; 120. 19.9; 121. 19.9; 122. 19.9; 123. 19.9; 124. 19.9; 125. 19.9; 126. 19.9; 127. 19.9; 128. 19.9; 129. 19.9; 130. 19.9; 131. 19.9; 132. 19.9; 133. 19.9; 134. 19.9; 135. 19.9; 136. 19.9; 137. 19.9; 138. 19.9; 139. 19.9; 140. 19.9; 141. 19.9; 142. 19.9; 143. 19.9; 144. 19.9; 145. 19.9; 146. 19.9; 147. 19.9; 148. 19.9; 149. 19.9; 150. 19.9; 151. 19.9; 152. 19.9; 153. 19.9; 154. 19.9; 155. 19.9; 156. 19.9; 157. 19.9; 158. 19.9; 159. 19.9; 160. 19.9; 161. 19.9; 162. 19.9; 163. 19.9; 164. 19.9; 165. 19.9; 166. 19.9; 167. 19.9; 168. 19.9; 169. 19.9; 170. 19.9; 171. 19.9; 172. 19.9; 173. 19.9; 174. 19.9; 175. 19.9; 176. 19.9; 177. 19.9; 178. 19.9; 179. 19.9; 180. 19.9; 181. 19.9; 182. 19.9; 183. 19.9; 184. 19.9; 185. 19.9; 186. 19.9; 187. 19.9; 188. 19.9; 189. 19.9; 190. 19.9; 191. 19.9; 192. 19.9; 193. 19.9; 194. 19.9; 195. 19.9; 196. 19.9; 197. 19.9; 198. 19.9; 199. 19.9; 200. 19.9; 201. 19.9; 202. 19.9; 203. 19.9; 204. 19.9; 205. 19.9; 206. 19.9; 207. 19.9; 208. 19.9; 209. 19.9; 210. 19.9; 211. 19.9; 212. 19.9; 213. 19.9; 214. 19.9; 215. 19.9; 216. 19.9; 217. 19.9; 218. 19.9; 219. 19.9; 220. 19.9; 221. 19.9; 222. 19.9; 223. 19.9; 224. 19.9; 225. 19.9; 226. 19.9; 227. 19.9; 228. 19.9; 229. 19.9; 230. 19.9; 231. 19.9; 232. 19.9; 233. 19.9; 234. 19.9; 235. 19.9; 236. 19.9; 237. 19.9; 238. 19.9; 239. 19.9; 240. 19.9; 241. 19.9; 242. 19.9; 243. 19.9; 244. 19.9; 245. 19.9; 246. 19.9; 247. 19.9; 248. 19.9; 249. 19.9; 250. 19.9; 251. 19.9; 252. 19.9; 253. 19.9; 254. 19.9; 255. 19.9; 256. 19.9; 257. 19.9; 258. 19.9; 259. 19.9; 260. 19.9; 261. 19.9; 262. 19.9; 263. 19.9; 264. 19.9; 265. 19.9; 266. 19.9; 267. 19.9; 268. 19.9; 269. 19.9; 270. 19.9; 271. 19.9; 272. 19.9; 273. 19.9; 274. 19.9; 275. 19.9; 276. 19.9; 277. 19.9; 278. 19.9; 279. 19.9; 280. 19.9; 281. 19.9; 282. 19.9; 283. 19.9; 284. 19.9; 285. 19.9; 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Bergkamp has Wembley in his sights

Football

By Glenn Moore
Football Correspondent

DENNIS BERGKAMP will wake up in Arsenal's London hotel tomorrow morning, carefully get out of bed and gingerly stretch his limbs. In that moment he will know if he is to play in tomorrow's 11th FA Cup final.

days ago. However, his chances of playing against Newcastle United remain in the balance.

After joining in a full training session for the first time yesterday he said: "I'm happy that I'm still in with a chance, but I'm still thinking about the injury when I train. I will push it harder tomorrow and I will know as soon as I stand up on Saturday morning whether I am fit. I want to play but I have to be 100 per cent fit."

Arsene Wenger, the Arsenal manager, said: "I am surprised he has recovered this much

but a practice match is not a cup final. We can't recreate that intensity 48 hours before the game so, if he plays, it will still be a gamble. Fortunately the injury is superficial not deep."

"I'm encouraged that he wants to play. He is thinking only of Arsenal and not of the possibility of injuring himself for the World Cup."

"I will make the decision, but I know he is not the sort of player to cheat and tell me he is fit when he is not. He will have to be comfortable with his body and he will be honest with me."

He knows how important this game is for Arsenal."

Wenger then underlined the importance of Bergkamp, who made a brief appearance in west London to receive his Football Writers' Player of the Year award last night. "He is a leader on the field. He is easy to find in the game for defenders and midfielders. He gives them an option when they have the ball and that improves the confidence of the team. He is creative with his passing and can score goals. But he is like everybody. He may be a huge

player but, if he is not fit, he cannot play."

Arsenal have no other injury worries, although Ian Wright is still short of match fitness and, said Wenger, "he might not last the whole game". This means Wenger is unlikely to take the risk of starting with both Wright and Bergkamp. Wright could be a substitute, but Bergkamp will either start or watch.

Newcastle appear to be injury-free, though little news was emerging from their training camp. Of the two, Arsenal's build-up appears more relaxed. Yesterday they sat in the Hertfordshire sunshine after training and took turns to meet the press. Tony Adams was expansive; Martin Keown thoughtful; Patrick Vieira a mixture of intensity and smiles; Emmanuel Petit, dressed all in white like a latter-day Jean Borotra, confident and phlegmatic.

Petit, now recovered from Don Hutchison's crude tackle 12 days ago, said he believed coming to England had cost him a place in the World Cup but it was still worth it. This surprising assertion was given weight by his evident enjoyment of the ambience and much else to do with the English game.

Petit, like Vieira and Nicolas Anelka, is in Aimé Jacquet's preliminary 28-man squad, but he said: "He [Jacquet] thinks players are much better if they are playing in Italy so it will be very difficult for me, Patrick and Nicolas. He has his team, his players. I don't think he's even been here to see us, though his assistant has."

"He thinks the best players in the world are in Italy. There are so many great players there but, for me, it's not so good because it's so boring. When I'm watching it I have to reach for the remote control and turn over. I could have gone to Italy but I prefer England. The football here is like life. I can be me. It is a joy to play and never boring."

"If I don't make the World Cup I will still be France's biggest supporter but I will be on the beach, with my friends and some wine."

1952 revisited, page 28

Liebenberg starts with a flourish

Cricket

By Derek Pringle
In Worcester

South Africa 287-4dec
v Worcestershire 31-1

THE OMENS were looking good for England, after South Africa ended their opening day of the tour 287 for 4 declared. Normally visiting teams come to Worcester, acknowledge the impressive 11th Century cathedral, perhaps partake of the sumptuous teas, and get roundly thrashed. They then manage, as Australia did last season, to go on and turn the tables against the national side and win the Test series by about the third or fourth Test.

As first outings go, South Africa will have every right to be pleased with themselves as three of the top four passed fifty. The classiest offering, by some distance, came from Daryll Cullinan, who ended unbeaten on 67, though both Jacques Kallis, with 75, and Gerhardus Liebenberg (98) made up for points lost to style with a steely determination during a tricky first session.

Following a hectic winter over which 11 Tests and 22 one-day matches were played, South Africa have left themselves just five playing days before their first international. With Shaun Pollock nursing a slight abdominal strain and Brian McMillan rested, it was probably not quite the Test side England will face at Edgbaston on 4 June, but it was close.

A few matches may not seem long to acclimatise, but with Worcestershire's bowlers straying a yard too short on a misty morning ideal for bowling, the batsmen probably feel at home already. Indeed had the South African captain, Hansie Cronje, not been seeking the chance of two innings

for his batsmen, he would surely not have resisted the temptation to bowl first after winning the toss.

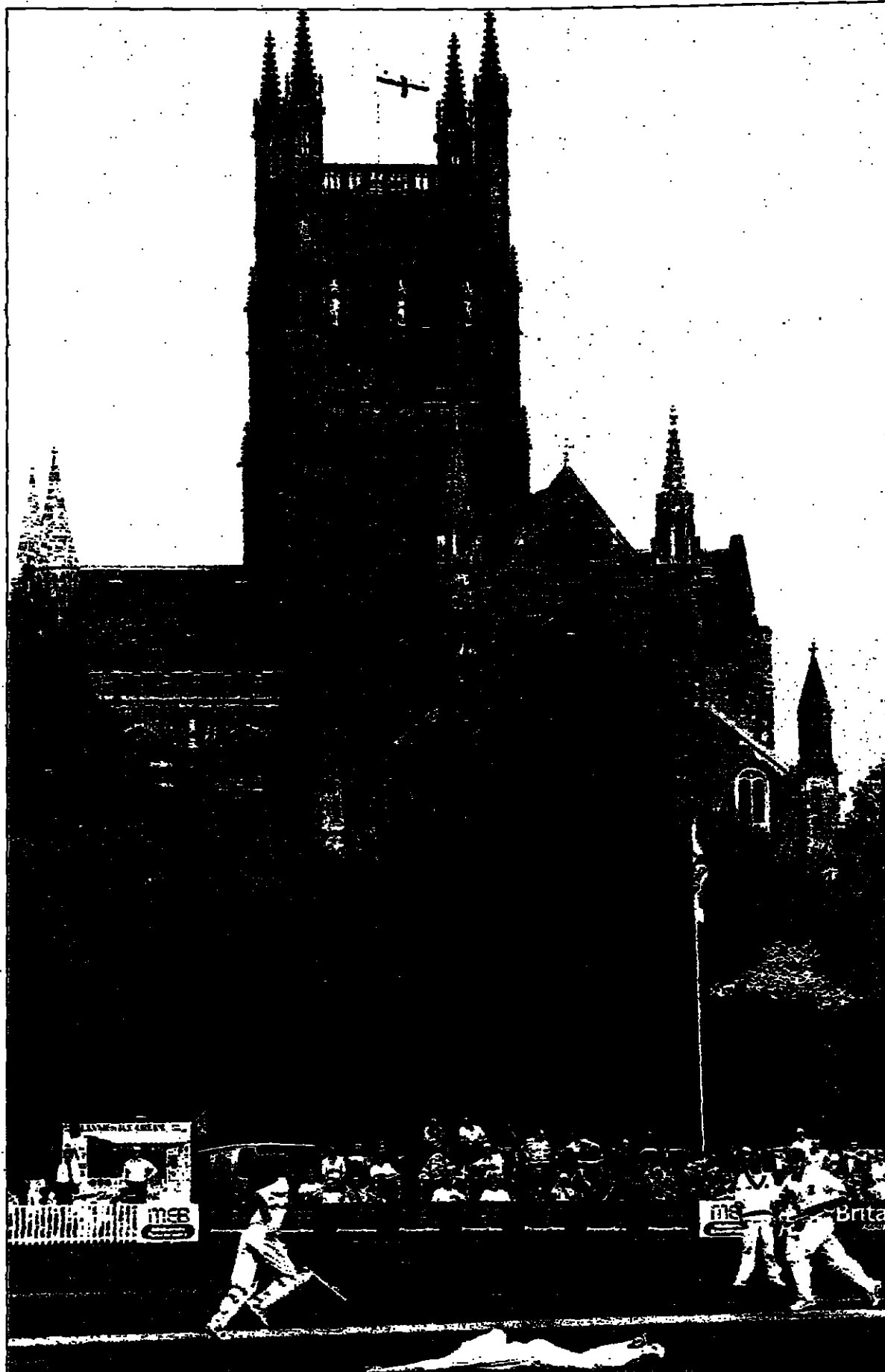
Perversely, things began well for the home side when the evergreen Phil Newport, swinging the new ball, had Gary Kirsten caught at bat pad by Matthew Ramsley for one. Instead of running through their opponents as they do most years, the home side had to wait almost four hours for their next success, when Kallis was bowled driving past a good one from Alamgir Shariyar that came back sharply off the seam.

Kallis settled quicker than his partner Liebenberg, who had a period where most of his scoring strokes ended up at third man.

At 26, Liebenberg is, along with Kirsten, the first opener in residence, playing in both Tests against Sri Lanka during April. A tall cautious player, Liebenberg's demise, two runs short of his century, probably surprised him as much as anyone else after he top-edged a slog off Graeme Hick, deputising for the injured captain, Tom Moody.

The catcher was Ramsley who, deputising for the injured Richard Illingworth, had a hand in three of the four dismissals. Ramsley was also primarily responsible - though Cullinan's change of mind did not help - for running out Cronje. Unfortunately it had little to do with his bowling which Cullinan, in particular, clouted to all parts of New Road, including a thumping flat six over long-off.

Set a tricky 40 minutes to bat, Worcestershire quickly lost Vikram Solanki, caught on the crease by the slippery-paced Lance Klusener. At the other end Allan Donald bristled but did not strike and Hick took a brace of fours off the fast bowler that even Graham Gooch, watching here as a selector, would have been proud of.



South Africa increase their total in the shadow of Worcester cathedral

Photograph: David Ashdown

Fowler out of action 'until Christmas'

By Catherine Riley

NO SOONER had his injury-curtailled season ended than Robbie Fowler was told he would be facing the rest of the year without football.

Following a clash with the Everton goalkeeper, Thomas Myhre, during the Merseyside derby at Anfield in February, the Liverpool striker suffered knee cartilage damage which kept him out of the remainder of the season and ended his hopes of playing in the World Cup finals.

"There were some reports that he had visions of playing pre-season, but he certainly won't be playing before Christmas. That is the estimation at the moment," the Liverpool physiotherapist, Mark Leather, said yesterday.

"At the moment he is exercising, jogging out of a brace, weight-lifting and doing plenty of pool work. He is still ahead of schedule at this stage but he will certainly not be playing first-team football until the later stages of the year."

It means Fowler will also play no part in Liverpool's friendly against Internazionale at Anfield on 4 August. The game is part of the deal which brought Paul Ince to Liverpool from the San Siro last summer.

Premiership runners-up Manchester United are still hopeful of signing the Cameroon international Marc Vivien Foe from French champions Lens. The United club secretary, Ken Ramsden, said: "We haven't confirmed a deal with his club yet so there is no progress there. It is still ongoing."

Despite relegation to the First Division, Crystal Palace look certain to become the third club to benefit from Chelsea's European success by qualifying for the Interfoto Cup.

Aston Villa moved into the Uefa Cup courtesy of Chelsea's European Cup-Winners' Cup victory over Stuttgart on Wednesday, ruling the Midlands out of having to compete in the Interfoto Cup to gain a place in Europe.

Palace were the only Premier League club apart from Villa to express an interest in the pre-season tournament and unless another club declares an interest before the deadline for entries of 2 June, it will be Palace who try to secure one of three places on offer in next season's Uefa Cup.

It will not be easy for them, however. The Eagles would need to win three two-legged matches, culminating in the finals on 11 August and 25, to secure a Uefa spot.

Palace's European adventures will take place without Tomas Brotha, however. The Swedish international has been released by the Selhurst Park club he joined in January.

The former Leeds and Parma player has been unable to recapture his once deadly form and fitness and failed to score in 15 appearances for the Eagles, nor did he play in the last three games of the season when relegation was confirmed.

Palace have also released four other players: Patricio Bilio, who was a non-contract player, Rory Ginty, Richard Kennedy and David Stevens.

McLeod's ambition, page 28

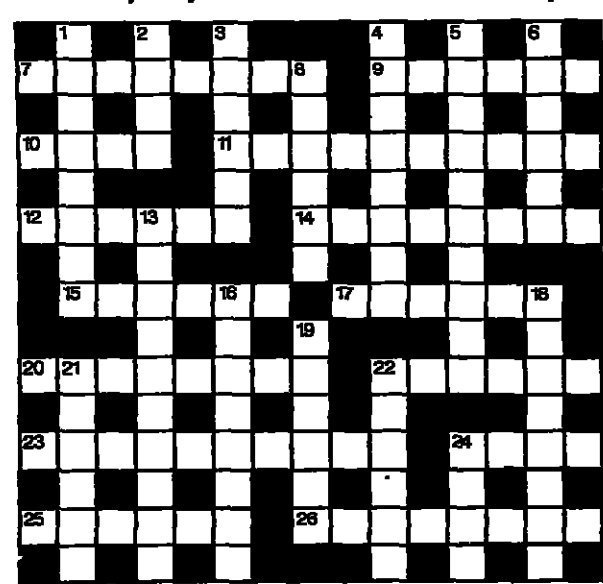
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3611, Friday 15 May

By Phil

Thursday's solution



ACROSS
7 Police officer taking on austere area (3)
9 King to take refuge in a fake religious establishment (6)
10 Composer's live recital's opening - good (4)
11 Supplies plough that's immobile (10)
12 Doctor on boat? Capital (6)
14 Greek and American followed by Scot (8)
15 British farming concern has local office (6)
17 Shade open wide, having yard covered (6)
20 Ancient jugs in a hamper served up with love (8)
22 Humming tops in spinning may easily lurch list and yaw (6)

DOWN
23 Columnist making you glance, startled, round front of newspaper (5, 5)
24 Stupid craze receding with time (4)
25 Chap in queue, without question, full of information (6)
26 See game around Northern Scottish location (4, 4)
1 One eventually goes off damaging property in the local area (4, 4)
2 Men-only phase should be curtailed (3)
3 Bob spotted a puzzle (6)
4 TV programme - see host walk unsteadily (4, 4)
5 Knowing about alterations to the ion interference? (5, 5)

6 Stew bound to be overturned - look! (6)
8 Hard worker a bit upset before start of year (6)
13 Support for duels makes Conservative course with rage (4, 6)
16 Musical song contains some purpose (8)
18 Swimmer getting first place (first in freestyle is hard) (8)
19 Writer takes most of coins I left (6)
21 Mother capturing animal in large bottle (6)
22 The terrible smell is fish (6)
24 Effort giving some good in time (4)

Banks floats idea of football regulator

Sports politics

THE sports minister, Tony Banks, yesterday floated the idea of a new football regulator to guard fans from exploitation by clubs. He told a committee of MPs that football was not like other products, in that fans could not switch clubs in search of lower prices.

Fresh from celebrating Chelsea's European Cup-Winners' Cup victory in Stockholm, Banks told the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee he had just paid £1,250 for a season ticket to Stamford Bridge next season.

It was, he said, a lot of money. Put to him that a ticket for Watford would cost less, he said he would still support Chelsea, even if he had won the election he fought unsuccessfully in 1979 to become Watford MP.

"Football isn't just another product," he said. "You can't just say it's like a car or a refrigerator where you just switch brands. You can't do that with football, so football has a responsibility."

Asked what could be done to ensure fans got value for money in terms of ticket prices, merchandising and broadcast-

ing of matches, he said: "There are ways this could be done."

"If we recognise football is not like any normal product, because it isn't just something we can switch in and out of, we could introduce a regulator. It's not government policy but it's a possibility."

"We interfere in the market for public utilities, because we recognise their role in the economy is different from other products. You can't survive without electricity and water so you can't let free market forces rip in this area. I suspect you could survive without football though some people would question that."

Banks said the football Task Force would also be considering the question of ticket prices and merchandising.

"It will be a very difficult area, but the mere fact that we can't solve all the problems to everyone's satisfaction isn't an excuse for not looking at the problems. I feel that we as politicians can assist the organisers of sports to recognise there is a long-term interest."

He referred to allegations that two Newcastle United directors had boasted of replica kits costing the club £5 that

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